2020

The Show Must Go On: Political Dramaturgy and Practical Wisdom in the Art of Municipal Leadership Practice

Kerry JS Kincaid Dr.
University of St. Thomas, kerryjsk@yahoo.com

The Show Must Go On: Political Dramaturgy and Practical Wisdom in the Art of Municipal Leadership Practice

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

By
Kerry JS Kincaid

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

December 2020

UNIVERISTY OF ST. THOMAS, MINNESOTA

The Show Must Go On: Political Dramaturgy and Practical Wisdom in the Art of Municipal Leadership Practice

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as meeting departmental criteria for graduating with honors in scope and quality.

We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

Dissertation Committee:

Donald R. LaMagdeleine ,
Donald R. LaMagdeleine, Ph.D., Committee Chair

Cindy Lavorato
Cindy Lavorato, J.D., Committee Member

Michael R. Fine
Michael R. Fine, Ph.D., Committee Member

January 28, 2021
Final Approval Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge the wisdom of my teachers in the St. Thomas University Leadership Program, especially my dissertation chair Dr. Donald LaMagdeleine. They built a meaningful program that gave students the courage to explore and the time to contemplate what leadership is and might be. It is a loss to leadership studies that this broad thinking program no longer exists.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to local political leaders around the world who work with citizens every day to do what is right and good in their cities. But especially to my colleagues on the City Council in [Clearwater] who served with a determined dignity and intentional compassion. And most especially to the City Council Vice President, a woman whose sharp wit served both as a mirror and a magnifier to my public service. Power is a wonderful thing.

ABSTRACT

Research on complex municipal redevelopment projects from an insider's perspective is a much-needed addition to the discipline of leadership studies in the United States. International research has shown that project leadership must be examined as the exercise of power toward an intended outcome, and that leaders employ various strategies to determine that outcome. This intense normative case study analyzes how leaders of a large municipal redevelopment project used knowledge of local values, forms of social capital, and adept practical wisdom as effective strategies to successfully complete the project. The significance of the intense normative case study approach used here cannot be overstated, employing the researcher's insider perspective to ask: What did it take to build an Arts Center in a mid-sized city in the Midwest, US?

Based on a review of literature examining cities as complex social systems, along with theories of constructing social space there in, 51 intense one-on-one interviews were conducted with people actively involved in the project. The data strongly supports the use of Goffman's dramaturgical theory as an analytic tool for studying the art of leadership in municipal redevelopment, in conjunction with theories of power; particularly the elements in Bourdieu's structural constructivism of habitus and circulating social capital, and Flyvbjerg's critique of contemporary social science as lacking a phronetic framework with which to study power as a practical art. In addition, emergent complexity theory newly applied to social systems, informed the analysis of leaders' strategic responses to events that lay outside regular expectations.

The data demonstrated that leaders with earned social capital, who understood the city's habits and values and how to manipulate them with dramatic invocations and enactments, exercised their accumulated practical knowledge to reach an intended outcome.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

PAGE

INTRODUCTION AND RETROSPECTIVE

… a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing …

Macbeth, William Shakespeare, 1623

On a recent autumn evening my husband and I walked our dogs in our city's downtown park that stretches the confluence of two rivers across from our new Arts Center. The park was full of people enjoying one last balmy evening before the winter months set in. At the rivers' edge a little band of kayakers was preparing a flotilla for a chilly float down the river. They had decorated their kayaks with neon flexible lights, each expressing the personality of its owner. We stopped our walk to watch them take off, laughing and excited for a nighttime ride with close friends. Other activity captured our attention too. We smiled a little at the hand-holding lovers strolling back and forth in slow motion across two pedestrian bridges, as if to keep their moment alive. We met other dog walkers too who stopped to exchange friendly dog-pets. In a public plaza across the river from where we stood, daredevil skateboarders defied park rules to show off their boarding virtuoso for starstruck groupies.

Immediately behind the public plaza rose an imposing Arts Center, its dark stone exterior barely visible save the colorful pattern of lights moving across the outside walls keeping time to a secret and internal music. It was hard to believe that just a decade ago this busy and beautiful spot was a contaminated waste site and a crumbling parking lot. We stopped our walk to sit a spell and take in the enormous change in our downtown. My mind swirled with memories of the

complex story that created this change; a story I knew as well as I know my own children, its twists and turns belying the sanguine social performances in front of our eyes.

A fairy tale version of that story would simply say that it was meant to be. But the more honest story is that it drained every ounce of energy this city had to offer and gobbled up the last half of my political career. Despite its complexity and my exhaustion, I felt the story signified something important; a tale that needed telling. But how to go about it? I could have focused on a couple scenes, I guess, hoping the reader would grasp the story's complex trajectory through my sparse but carefully chosen data bits. But that would not have been honest storytelling. Instead, I decided the only way to tell a big story was to tell a big story. So that is what I did in the dissertation that follows.

But before I begin telling of my excellent adventure, I offer a retrospective reflection on what I learned in the process - about this city, leadership, and myself.

Lessons Learned

As my dissertation draws to a close, it is difficult for me to consider that this story could be repeated in another place or time. This may be the folly of an insider's bias, but I cannot shake the belief that something magic happened here. A pinpoint in time when the right people with the right motives, who happened to live in this city at the same time, scooped up a serendipitous advantage to build an Arts Center in the middle of their city. I find this possibility both exciting and alarming. Exciting, because if anything can happen, anything can happen. Alarming, because it is unnerving to think that anything can happen – one day your city is chugging along in a functioning democracy. The next day a pandemic hits; 350,000 people die, your neighbor loses her restaurant, and the rest of the world closes its doors to your country. The

first lesson I learned in writing this dissertation is, as complexity teaches us – leaders must pay attention.

I spent well over a year pouring over a sea of data about what was in essence a leadership dilemma – the challenge of choosing a good outcome among other possibilities. During my research I interviewed many fellow leaders and listened to the voice in my own head as we relived a decade of strategizing what we hoped were perfect leadership tactics. But it wasn't pretty. Obstacles we could not have imagined forced us to rethink and regroup at every turn. I could be dismayed by this zig zagging path, but I am not. Instead, I came to realize that this is the lesson of old leadership – the Shaman, the Virtuoso.

The leadership program at St. Thomas University taught me this; my experience leading this project proved they were right. As my professor Dr. LaMagdeleine said, leadership is the art of imagination – phronesis - the imagination to effortlessly address a billion challenges with a billion perfect strategies. But it takes time to become this virtuoso. So, leadership is also an arc, and one is a better leader at the end than at the beginning. (I know there are exceptions of course.) Just as the artist needs time to perfect their craft, the leader requires time to build a confident inner voice, grow a thick skin, perform with unflinching and contagious calm, and uncover the secrets lurking in the future's crystal ball. The second lesson I learned from my dissertation is that leadership is an art that takes time.

Insider scholars never stray far from the thing they are studying. Even if the thing is a past lived experience, the re-living of it seeps into the words and thinking of the doer - now turned writer. There is a choice, however, about whether to maintain a stiff-armed distance or put your whole self into the research. I chose the latter. In the chapters that follow I spilled my guts,

and my secrets, about what it was like to lead a large complex project in a city I cared about. As I was writing I watched myself in each scene, proudly at times, embarrassingly at others, giving the speech that needed to be given, forging ahead while others coughed in my dust, or bending weak imaginations to my vision of a good end. The third lesson I learned from my dissertation is that I was willing and capable of doing what had to be done.

Introductory Guide

I designed the trajectory of this big story to guide the reader as effortlessly as possible through a complex narrative, starting with this brief introduction. Chapter One establishes a foundation of scholarly literature that formed the analytic and methodological framework for my study. Erving Goffman's view of social space through a dramaturgical lens is central, as is Bourdieu's concept of habitus as an accepted disposition toward the way things work and his exchange market of social capital therein. Complexity theorists offered a possible leadership response to unexpected events in complex social systems like cities, and Flyvbjerg's seminal work on phronetic leadership challenged me to produce meaningful social science with tactical detail. Chapter Two defines and defends my methodological approach using a qualitative normative case study about leadership in a municipal redevelopment project. My role as participant researcher is explained in detail. In Chapter Three the reader learns about my moral career, defined by Goffman as a window into the career holder's thoughts and habits. This chapter also establishes my credibility as an insider scholar.

The next two chapters provide a much-needed background and context for the study. Chapter Four describes the city's history and core habitus. Beginning with the city's incorporation in 1891, it travels quickly in time to concentrate on the last 20 years as most

germane to my study. The historical development of the city's center and its attitude toward local governance are central themes. Chapter Five offers a conventional description of the Arts Center project as a municipal redevelopment effort. (Arts Center is a pseudonym.) This decade long process began with an idea for replacing two aging theatre venues with a new Center shared by the city and the university. Major tensions arose over funding, location, design, and operations, which played out in multiple public decision-making processes. The chapter attempts to anchor the study with a typical account of who, what, when and where. It stands in contrast to the remainder of the case study; whose insider reflexive approach is not as customary in leadership studies.

The last two chapters analyze data using the normative case study approach that included intense interviews, observations, and mining resources in social and print media, including constant reflection on the data. The chapters are presented as three mini-dramas that occurred at crucial decision-making points – a City Council vote, a public referendum, and a state budget deliberation. Using Goffman's dramaturgical perspective, the mini dramas are evaluated for the effectiveness of their front and backstage performances and their relationship to the city's core habitus. In all, phronesis, or practical wisdom, in leadership is highlighted and explored.

The epilogue brings the reader up to date with the current state of the Arts Center, filling in the time between the dissertation's end when the Arts Center opened and it first two years of operation. Per custom, the dissertation ends with conclusions and implications for further study. The latter includes suggestions for more intense case study methodology in leadership studies, especially with a dramaturgical analytic lens.

CHAPTER ONE

Relevant Literature: Dramaturgy and Leadership as Practical Wisdom

> This is the decisive psychological quality of the politician: [her] ability to let realities work upon [her] with inner concentration and calm: hence [her] distance to things and men.
> Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, 1946

> … the main problem I have tried to solve today,
> that of knowing how one can make things with words…
> Pierre Bourdieu, *Social Space and Symbolic Power*, 1989

Introduction

Scholars have been thinking about leadership far longer than I. Yet, as leadership scholar Keith Grint (2005, pp. 14-15) said "three thousand years of pondering leadership and half a century of academic research have brought us no closer to defining it". I share his sentiment. Even after practicing political leadership for more than two decades and concentrating the trajectory of my education at St. Thomas University to the study of political leadership, culminating in this dissertation, I have no concise definition for what leadership is or a playbook for how it works - do this, and you will be a leader. But this predicament does not dampen my intellectual curiosity and I am humbly prepared to add my scholarship to the area of leadership studies. Before I do, however, I review the relevant literature of the scholars whose thinking helped focus my study.

The first section of the chapter dwells on topical literature under two themes: Cities as a context for social interaction and leadership in complex social systems like cities. Taken together, these two themes form a complimentary body of literature that builds the context behind my case study. A second section focuses on analytic literature under four interconnected

themes: Goffman's dramaturgical model; Bourdieu's theory of the habits and dispositions that constrain social action and his forms of capital as a medium of exchange, emphasizing symbolic violence in the expenditure of symbolic capital; Flyvbjerg's concept of phronesis, or practical wisdom, operating in a situated rationality; and LaMagdeleine's approach to leadership studies as both art and science, which employed all the previous concepts. These scholars built the complimentary analytic framework for the boots-on-the-ground study I undertook.

My approach painted with a broad brush by touching on the ideas of many scholars. I realize this could make it difficult for the reader to absorb the breadth of thinking I have lain before them. I could find no other way to acknowledge the intertwined scholarship behind what was a complicated case study about a big story.

Cities

I begin the review of literature with a discussion about cities. They are examined at length because they formed the fundamental contextual frame for my study – all the action happened in a city. Robert E. Park (Park, 1925; Park et al., 1915, p. 577, 612), urban sociologist, said cities "magnify … and advertise human nature…" and thus "justify the view that would make of a city a laboratory or clinic in which human nature and social processes may be most conveniently and profitably studied". A later scholar, geographer Kafui Attoh (2011), also placed special meaning on the city as a site for sociological study. "The city is its geography – a connecting and invisible line that defines who lives in the city and who does not. There are no holes in the border, but one end always touches the other, closing the inhabitants within. This invisible line creates a microcosm of life… and is a product of those who inhabit it." This study

was surely a laboratory of the whole of human nature in far more complexity than one dissertation can capture.

Cities as Social Context

The first thing to say about cities is that they are old. Plato's *Republic*, written about 375 BCE, considered the ideal of a just city – a philosophical interest of his (Plato, 1968, p. 35-61; Kraut, 2017). Plato captured his teacher Socrates' thoughts in the idea that "the city comes into being because each of us is not self-sufficient but is in need of much… there is no other beginning to the founding of a city". *The Republic*, which was written by Plato as a firsthand account of an ongoing dialogue between Socrates and his students, went on to say that cities grow in complexity because of increasing and specialized needs, which eventually require a governing system and a defense mechanism. Plato's ideal "polis" (city) was the seat of education and knowledge, governed by a philosopher king whose wisdom of the arts inured him to leadership outside of self-interest. As an ideal it was unattainable, yet in the *Republic*, Plato presented the conditions that made it "the most possible". All this simply to assert that thinkers have been thinking about how cities work for a long time.

Jump ahead almost two thousand years; thinkers were still thinking about cities. To paraphrase Robert E. Park's work (Park et al., 1925), who expanded Plato's notion that cities are born of need, to propose they are born in the rational mind of the civilized man as a state of mind, a body of customs and traditions. Therefore, all of human history "rests on the basic phenomenon of human existence in the city ... as the expression of human values in an intertwined ecology of geographic, economic, cultural, and political organizations (pp. 112-122). Cities are not just an artifact of human need; they are devised and manipulated by the human

imagination. Park came to these insights with a grounded approach to studying cities and is credited with being among the first to employ the case study as a methodological approach to social research.

Jane Jacobs was another boots-on-the-ground researcher of cities. As Jacobs described in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (2011, pp. 37, 186, first published in 1961) her research began with an interest in uncovering the street life of good cities, but by the time she finished she produced a monumental defense of what she called "foot people" - those whom experts ignore or belittle - and their wisdom about how a city actually works. Cities are ecosystems, she said, whose secrets can only be captured by a keen-eyed observation fixed on the smallest detail. The first half of her book described in intimate detail how sidewalks and neighborhoods create the "modicum of public responsibility" people must feel for one another to have a successful city life. The second part bemoaned the powerful city planning policies of her day, which she said suffered the burden of the "unsuitable aim of converting cities into disciplined works of art" (p.489). Look for how people actually live together she said, in the particulars of their messy urban lives reside the secrets to the good city.

Jump ahead a few decades to find contemporary thinkers who are certain that cities must be meaningful places. Peter Kageyama's book *For the Love of Cities* (2011, p.1-11, 44-49) argued that people who love their cities make a difference in them. His book is a recipe for how to form an emotional connection to a city and then capitalize on that love. Cities do that, he said, not only by being functional, safe, and interesting, but meaningful. Meaningfulness, Kageyama said, is what people seek after they have their "core needs" met and will be chased by this generation like the "high paying jobs of generations past". Creating meaning is primarily a function of giving people feedback and space to make things and contribute – all fundamental to

human nature. For a city's "official actors" this means becoming cheerleaders for a "bottom-up energy" of "co-creators" (p.185, 199) who love their city. Cities in the 21st century will need to capture this enthusiastic love to create places people want to live.

In this short discussion the reader gained some understanding of the historical importance of the city as a focus for studying social interaction. Plato admired the just city and lauded the wisdom of the philosopher to command such. Robert Park revealed the complexities of urban life through painstakingly detailed observations using a researcher's neutral gaze. Jacobs sought the good city and Kageyama the meaningful one. These scholars were deeply curious about how the city shaped social life. Next, I briefly examine the modern phenomenon of how cities stay alive by growing.

Cities and Urban Redevelopment

In this section I present a brief history of urbanization and urban planning, from its government-as-manager roots to its entrepreneur-like collaboration with a growth mind-set. The necessity of growth to the city is the primary point and played a significant part in my study.

Urbanization

Urbanization, the migration of people from rural to urban settings, is an established phenomenon whose characteristics "apply to the entire range of human history" (Ortman et al., 2014, p. 1). In a recent examination, Bretagnolle et al. (2015, p.862) used census data to track urbanization rates from 1790-2010 in the US showing that the urbanized population grew from 5.7% in 1790 to 93.8% in 2010. Further, global population data shows that urban growth between 2010 and 2040 will further concentrate the urban population (MacLeod, 2011, p. 2630).

Urbanization offers many advantages to human society: higher levels and returns on education, more diversified activities, and “knowledge spillover” due to a proximity to one another (Bertinelle & Black, 2002, p.4). But city dwelling also presents challenges. For example: concentrations of urban poor (Crocker-Buque et al., 2017) the intensification of urban inequalities (Nicholls & Beaumont, 2004) and as Richard Florida (2017, pp. 1-2) coined it “urban failure” with significant income inequality even in cities “winning in the creative economy”. These challenges have sometimes led to the physical decay of the city center. Which historically, leaders tackled with urban redevelopment programs.

Urban Redevelopment as a practice

Urban redevelopment (UR) – also called urban renewal - is a broad concept that describes a process for addressing the parts of a city that have fallen into disrepair by making improvements that attract private investment, thereby raising property values and spurring economic growth (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urbsn_renewal). UR is used today by many cities as an economic development tool to revitalize central business districts through renovation and investment.

Though not always the purview of the public sector in modern times, UR is primarily led by city planning departments whose primary role is seen by the profession as a protector of the public good (Vitiello, 2013). As reflected in the organization’s mission statement:

> Our primary obligation is to serve the public interest and we, therefore, owe our allegiance to a conscientiously attained concept of the public interest that is formulated through continuous and open debate. We shall achieve high standards of professional integrity, proficiency, and knowledge.
>
> www.planning.org/aboutapa

Urban planning has tremendous power to shape society (Reps, 1965; Graham, 2016) by creating and defining a physical setting for human activity – who lives here and who lives there; what kinds of work occur here or there; how do people get from here to there. Since the 1950's, when Planning first became a profession, planner's public purpose developed a forward-looking view of an orderly "pattern of future urban land use" that would not exceed utility and transportation infrastructure capabilities (Akimoto, 2009, pp. 475-479). Orderly growth is the solemn and slow agenda behind all city planning.

Cities Must Grow

But grow they must. So, cities discovered that orderly growth could be sped up through alliances with the private sector. In 1976 sociologist Harvey Molotch coined the phrase "the growth machine" for this alliance. In it, he meant that the essence of any locality in America at the time was growth, accomplished through a "master elite" in an alliance of political elites, city planners and business interests (cited in Logan et al., 1997, p. 604). Molotch observed that since cities were geographically bound and land was finite, redevelopment became the only mechanism for growth. The elites may prosper from his growth machine, but so did the city.

In another groundbreaking 1970's essay, David Harvey (1989, pp. 4-5) claimed that a "managerial" approach to urban governance (government as stabilizer of capitalist society) had given way to an "entrepreneurial" one (government as competitor and risk taker in capitalist society) necessitated in part by the recession of 1973 resulting in fiscal austerity and a "rising tide" of neoliberalism. Neoliberal thought believed that humans exist for a market that is governed by a natural law whose logic is to grow and accumulate (Chapman, 2015, p. 471). It preached that city planners could not possibly improve on what the market did spontaneously

(Lovering, 2007; Peiser, 1990). This ideology had a profound effect on the practice of urban redevelopment.

In an era that lacked sufficient public resources for UR, cities looked for ways to favor developers with an attractive local regulatory environment as they learned to "roll with" the growth machine" (MacLeod, 2011, pp. 2634-2645). Some public officials even became "predisposed to favor upper over lower strata interests" (Stone as cited in Gendron, 2006, p.6). But many scholars cautioned that the growth machine diminished democracy. MacLeod among them, warned the "deepening urban privatism" of pro-growth was redefining a "withering public realm" (pp. 2649-2650). There is not enough public space and free speech, he said. Other scholars claimed that pro-growth political leaders over-sold projects by ducking cost claims (Feiock, 2004) or conducted inadequate risk assessments that lacked accountability (Flyvbjerg et al., 2003). But the reality of the mid-1990's US city was, without sufficient funding from state or federal governments for infrastructure and population demands, cities were forced to find ways to take care of themselves.

Flyvbjerg's (1998) mega-project study was instrumental in turning scholarly attention to the flow of power through the particulars of urban planning. Other scholars before him, like Jane Jacobs (1961) and Robert Park (1925) focused their study of cities on people, not on the things of planning. Molotch's (cited in Logan, 1997) seminal work on the growth machine often uncovered the personal gain behind UR. But their studies were conventional descriptions of urban life, not lived experiences from which they could dig deep into the motivations of urban actors. My study breaks with that convention. As an insider, I aim to illuminate motivational details that are often overlooked in leadership literature.

Cities as Complex Social Systems

Before I begin the next discussion, I must provide a summary of the principles of complexity theory, which begin with an understanding of chaos theory. Chaos theory (Murray, 1989) began with a mathematical model of the weather. In 1963, Edward Lorenz set up a series of equations using a three-dimensional model that sought to explain how parameters that start out with only slight differences, like one decimal point, evolve in vastly different directions over time. He used the example of two drops of water falling together on a mountain top. One flows east, the other flows west. His interest was whether science could predict which drop would flow in which direction and thus build a powerful predictive capability. Later, Gert de Roo (2018, p. 5-6, 29-32) a spatial planning scientist who examined complex social systems, also noted Lorenz' observation that small changes in early inputs resulted in substantial changes in outcomes. This phenomenon came to be known as the "butterfly effect" a metaphor for the flapping of a butterfly's wings in a backyard garden resulting in a hurricane over the ocean. Chaos theory observes that non-linear systems exhibit "unpredictable behavior" that cannot be anticipated, and when they do eventually re-balance with their environment, never return to what they were and never reach equilibrium. In other words, complex natural systems always exist at the edge of chaos.

Over time, other scholarly disciplines began examining complexity to test the theory's applicability for moving beyond the logic of linear thought in social systems theory. Margaret Wheatley (1992) an early proponent of the application of chaos theory to organizational management, argued that chaos always has a shape (a geometric shape called a fractal in chaos theory) whose iterative pattern profoundly changes with the slightest variation (pp. 120-128). In human organizations this means that unpredictable individual action will occur, repeat, and

change the organization – the corner office is reserved for the boss, for example, but what if one day she moves to the office down the hall? Adaptive organizations can be open to this change yet remain consistent with themselves (autopoietic) if they maintain a strong frame of reference to their ordering principles (pp. 90-97) – the boss is still the boss even from the middle of the hall office, for example, but this move will likely change the organization in unforeseen ways.

Gert de Roo (2018) also connected social systems to complexity theory by asserting that like all non-linear systems, social systems encounter spontaneous and uncontrollable change. But he offered a reprieve from the fate of natural complex systems. He thought that while human systems could not predict chaotic phenomenon, they could manage chaos by adapting to it. de Roo related this idea specifically to cities, calling them complex adaptive and self-organizing systems. He said, if they adjust to changes in their environment, but remain bound by shared values, which he also likened to the "ordering principles" found in natural systems, cities could successfully adapt.

Another thinker of complexity, Nassim Taleb (2007) reframed social complexity by proposing a response to unpredictable events he called black swans, events that: lie outside regular expectations, have an extreme impact, and for which human nature concocts an explanation after the fact. In methodology theory the black swan represents the single finding that negates all the rest – one black swan calmly bobbing on a pond filled with white swans proves that not all swans are white. In his intelligently irreverent book titled the same, *The Black Swan* argued that "scientists and nonscientists, hotshots and regular Joes" are blind to this randomness, but should not be. He used the ill-logic of induction to explain. Induction makes general conclusions from specific experiences, but its conclusions can be based on a faulty logic that the past can predict the future. Consider the Thanksgiving turkey, Taleb wrote, who is fed

every day by friendly humans, but on the afternoon of the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, something unexpected happens to the turkey that will make all the difference to its otherwise peaceful existence. Taleb said, rather than this turkey blindness, people should "use the extreme event as the starting point" and better yet, learn how to "seize the importance of ideas and derive [their] consequences to win the day" (p. 256). His more specific how-to said that the antidote to black swans is to avoid being a "sucker" by converting "knowledge into actions and figuring out what knowledge is worth" (p.292). Sadly, too late for the turkey.

Adrian Little (in Geyer (Ed.), 2015, pp. 35-36) moved complexity into the realm of political decision making. He thought that since political theory could never know exactly what "constitutes the real or how human actors will interpret phenomena", political actors in complex environments should take more risks in the ways they organize institutional environments like government. In this risk assessment, political actors are better off when they account for context and work out what is possible within it. A complementary scholar, P. Cairney (2012, p. 348) pushed complexity even further into political science by revealing how problems arise when policy makers do not "recognize the complex nature of their policy environments". Complex systems still need leadership, Cairney claimed, but decision makers must understand how they as agents are affected by their environment and how their actions affect that same environment. He too recommended more trial and error.

Little also compared the epistemological value of complexity theory to that of phronesis, which B. Flyvbjerg (in Geyer (Ed.), 2015, pp. 41-47) elevated as one of Aristotle's three intellectual virtues that lauds the value of practical wisdom. (The reader will learn more about phronesis in the next section.) Little said that though complexity theory teaches that reality is always changing and never knowable, it may be manageable if leaders pay attention to the detail

in “local contexts” using a phronetic wisdom. Complexity theory can provide the tools to understand social systems but can contribute to the debate about what is actually possible.

In the same vein, the utility of local collective practice is of current interest to the field of organization theory in the concept of strategic emergence - an argument based on the claim that there is no blueprint, or plan, in complex systems where plans emerge collectively from those participating in the system (Chia & Holt, 2009, p. 55). The “plan” therefore, emerges from local action. Bouty, Gomez & Chia (2019) studied how paying attention to local action can help explain how social systems work. In a longitudinal study of a small gourmet restaurant, they discovered how “strategic coherence” emerged from local coping actions and “on the hoof” decisions (p.4). After observing what Dreyfus called “purposive” actions of workers in a restaurant - those performed without a purpose in mind - they found a process at work called wayfinding. One that emphasized local small actions that result in significant impacts, like changing how prepared dishes made their way to guest’s tables. The authors stressed Goffman’s sociological concept of habitus - socially embedded general dispositions – as important to understanding how coping actions both emerge and are bound by context (pp. 38-41). Their model called “strategic emergence” showed that strategies can emerge from local and unplanned practice.

Finally, I briefly turn to Keith Grint (2005, 2014), professor of Public Leadership at Warwick University, who hits the mark about leadership in complex systems with his concept of “wicked problems” – complex problems that cannot be solved in traditional ways because human values are part of the problem. Wicked problems are open to debate about “better or worse”, but never fit into “right or wrong” solutions. (Grint, 2005, p.9; 2010). He offered the example of trying to develop a health care service that responds to potentially infinite demands with finite

resources - difficult decisions must be made about who gets what based on what criteria. He said leadership in complex social systems is full of wicked problems and requires the right kind of decision making; one that accepts that there are no simple solutions and approaches problems with horizontal networking that searches for patterns using an agile leadership. Grint (2010) also said agile leaders will make lots of mistakes, but should lead boldly with practical, experimental, and collaborative "bravado."

In summary, this short discussion familiarized the reader with the tenants of complex systems, demonstrating how scholars applied these tenants to social systems.

The Construction of Social Space

The key ideas in this section form the essential analytic framework for my study. In general, they posit how social space is constructed and how people navigate that space toward their own good end. Habitus and symbolic capital, dramaturgy, and phronesis (practical wisdom) are the main concepts I sought to capture in the following discussion.

Bourdieu: Habitus and symbolic capital

Bourdieu's (LaMagdeleine, 2016, p. 65-71; Bourdieu, 1989) body of work is primarily interested in the relational aspects of a constructed social life, especially how social forces impinge on individual choice and actions. He thought it was essential that researchers concentrate on "social space" as a place where individuals negotiate their everyday lives within constructed and highly structured contexts. In his theory "social space" is an arena of thoughts and actions within a specific structure – for example, in stable democratic societies political space is bounded by a legal structure but practically upheld without legal pressure by everyday actions. Within a social space, people's accumulated conventions are expressed as "habits and

dispositions", which Bourdieu called habitus - the "mental structures through which [people] apprehend a structured social world (Bourdieu, 1985, p.18; Appelrouth, in Kivisto (Ed.), 2013, p.139-142). Again, in Bourdieu's words:

> The Logic of Practice (1990): Habitus is a system of durable, transposable dispositions, predisposed to function as structures; that is, as principles which generate and organize practices … that can be objectively adapted without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules; they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (Lizardo, 2009, p. 7)

Arthur Frank (in Flyvbjerg et al. (Eds), 2012, p. 53) offered an interpretation of habitus as "the embodied disposition of comfort, or discomfort, with a certain way of being. It is fixed but not durable, and not determinative but disposes the actor to certain actions". To clarify further, Weininger (2002, p. 128) reminds us that habitus is not "habits" because dispositions are adaptable in spontaneous and inventive ways, like the jazz musician who improvises without prior rehearsal. Within this collection of dispositions (habitus) people negotiate social life using a toolbox of capital that is the product of their social position within a field.

Bourdieu's field is a system of social positions with an internal and hierarchical power structure. In the field of state government in the US, for example, there is a hierarchical power structure between governors and city council presidents. Bourdieu constructed his field theory as a "distinctive set of assumptions, protocols and roles" (LaMagdeleine, 2016 p. 70-73). Fields with generally similar characteristics adopt local modifications based on history and traditions. For example, the field of local government accommodates different approaches to its practice, like differing numbers of elected officials, a weak or strong mayor, or no mayor but a city council president. Further, Bourdieu's field theory constructs a social topography of

"functionally differentiated parts of society" in which actors compete for position with the capital available to them (Anheier et al., 1995). Bourdieu (1989, p. 17) said these social differences exist in a "space of relationships that is as real as geographical space". Social difference (class) is not just a concept but is manifest in permanent groups "endowed with representations" called capital.

Bourdieu defined capital as a resource that can "assume tangible and intangible forms" (Anheier et al.,1995) that manifests itself in three types - economic, cultural (including symbolic), and social – that vary by content and convertibility, some being more fluid than others. Economic capital refers to monetary income and other financial assets. Cultural capital (status) refers to the accumulation of valued cultural objects such as art and formal education. This type incorporates a form called symbolic capital - the ability to define and legitimize cultural values and legitimize authority through position. Lastly, social capital refers to the resources available to those who belong to social networks, like a chamber of commerce, or university faculty, or medical auxiliary. Capital is circulated between and among social classes with varying degrees of difficulty; cultural capital being the most entrenched because it "clings to long-standing dispositions" learned through socialization. The hierarchical structure of social space tends to stabilize society but makes it difficult to move into a higher social space. For example, lottery winners whose instant wealth increases their economic capital may still be prevented admission into the cultural elite of old family and old money.

Bourdieu's social theory posits that social structure is upheld when these plural capitals are exchanged among and between social classes in the "politics of group-making" (Wacquant, 2013, p. 281). As a troubling exception, the state holds an exclusive form of symbolic capital Bourdieu called "symbolic violence" – a fragile field of legitimate physical and symbolic

violence, or coercion (Loyal & Quilley, 2017, pp. 430-433). Physical violence can never maintain state domination on its own, so it co-exists with symbolic violence, expressed in the consent to authority that maintains social order. Or, as Bourdieu said, the "state exists outside and within individuals…" Or, as summarized by Wacquant & Akcaoglu (2017, p.57) "power is never so efficient as when it disguises itself as paradoxically activated by the subordinate…"

Bourdieu said further:

> … the whole of my work is intended to produce a materialist theory of the symbolic… to account for a generalized obedience without coercion… There are people who got themselves obeyed or respected because they were literate, religious, holy, or handsome… (Loyal & Quilley, 2017)

It is important to emphasize that symbolic violence is also practiced between the social classes, not just by the state. As Bourdieu explained, (Weininger, 2002, p. 142) in a hierarchical social classification, social status offers a "veil of honor" to the holder that hides the economic and cultural capital that underlies their position. In this way honor becomes a "theatricalization" that legitimizes power. This societal state is further legitimized by what Connolly and Healy (2004, pp. 17,20) called a tendency for people to "reproduce their own subordination by the gradual internalization … of the ideas that subordinate them". It takes time to develop a taken-for-granted way of thinking and behaving, but the outcome is an internalized acceptance of the possibilities available to different social classes.

The recent scholarship of political theorist Kjaer (2013) employed another type of Bourdieu's symbolic capital, called political capital, to study local political leadership. Kjaer asked how mayors in structurally weak systems operated as effective political leaders. In a case study of mayors in such systems, he found that they circulated political capital as a type of currency in an exchange system of political influence. They earned political capital by investing

in leadership tasks that complied with the "norms and demands" of their jurisdiction, from which they received rewards such as respect, trust, and support. Local political leaders in weak mayoral systems, Kjaer conjectured, accomplished goals through the art of circulating political capital.

Later in his intellectual life Bourdieu became increasingly interested in politics and the effects of the state's exercise of symbolic violence. With a mission-like intellectual urgency, he tried to advance the possibility of democracy – a social state he defined as one in which everyone is inclined and able to take "political matters into their own hands" (Wacquant, 2004, p.3) The "words … that construct social reality… are the symbolic political struggle" in which official points of view have a "power of constitution" that preserves objective principles (Bourdieu, 1989, pp. 21-23). Therefore, Bourdieu said, "to change the world, one has to change the ways of world-making …" He offered two avenues for accomplishing this difficult task. First, he urged intellectuals to become more civically engaged as "collective intellectuals", and second charged leaders to reveal that the political world exists not through the debate of ideas but through "a silent and invisible agreement between social and mental structures" (Wacquant, p.10). In the 1990's Bourdieu gingerly entered the fray of protest rallies against the spread of a neo-liberal movement overtaking France. His involvement is said to have mattered to the outcome (Swartz, 2003, p.813-817).

Goffman: Dramaturgy – front and backstage performance

Erving Goffman (1922-1982) was a sociologist of everyday life. Described as a "theoretically oriented empiricist" and structural constructivist, he added to the development of social theory through his explanatory power (Collins & Ditton, 1980 p.174, 271). His main idea was that the self is a product of individual performance in social settings whose purpose is to

validate one's position in a stratified society. People construct a social reality from the structure of society. More explicitly, Goffman said that social actions are constrained by the unspoken and everyday dramatizations humans use to portray themselves in a "generally positive light" (Warfield Rawls, 1987, p. 136-139; LaMagdeleine, 2016, p. 50-55; Collins & Ditton (Eds.), 1980, p. 181; Goffman, 1973). Everyday presentations constrain social order via a contract that passes between the scene and the selves in the scene, upheld by rituals that preserve the self in a "commitment to shared practices" (Warfield Rawls, p.147). In this sense, the individual is equally interested in preserving the self AND the shared scene. For example, politicians perform for constituents to win votes and stay in office, but they also do so to perpetuate the governing system that preserves that office.

Goffman devised several models to organize the study of social life (Goffman in Lemert & Branaman (Eds.), 1997, pp. lxiv-lxxiii; Goffman, 1963, p. 83-110; Flyvbjerg, 1998, p. 228). One model, dramaturgy, described social life as theatre and employed the tactics of theatrical performance in a social narrative. Within this dramaturgical model, the narrower idea of the role of committed teams is most germane to my study. Goffman defined a team as a "set of individuals whose intimate co-operation was required to maintain a given definition of a situation" (1973, p. 77-105). Teams operate in service to the task, not the performers. Team members gain a familiarity with one another that is sacred and protected as they share the "sweet guilt of conspirators" and enjoy concealing certain facts to maintain team stability.

Goffman further elaborated the function of teams by describing two types of performance in which they engage: the real and the false (1973, p. 70-76). First, he made the point that performers do not need to feel sincere to give a convincing performance – he referenced the dutiful wife as an example. But they do need to stick to the script that the drama demands.

Goffman provided the analogy of a front and backstage to explore real and false performances (he called stages "regions"). The frontstage (or region) can be ironically false in that it is scripted with an expected decorum and a setting designed to give the audience a specific impression (Goffman in Lemert & Branaman (Eds.) 1997, pp. 97-99; Goffman, 1973, pp. 22, 107-140). The backstage as a more unrehearsed space, but related to frontstage performance even though "inconsistent with its appearance". This is where "illusions and impressions are painstakingly fabricated…" The back region is kept closed to the audience as a place where "vital secrets of the show are visible." Teams of actors flow back and forth between front and backstage work in solidarity with each other and in service to the message. The morality of this switching is not derided by Goffman in that he thought all social interaction consisted of "insincere signals" (Pettit, 2011).

And further on morality, Goffman (1959) built the concept of "moral career" to investigate the "social strand of a person's life course" as both the image of the self and publicly accessible. Goffman envisioned moral career as a framework for judging oneself and others, realizing that one's narrative typically constructs a life course that selects and distorts in order to align with the basic values of society. As such, the moral self does not belong to the person but "dwells in the pattern of social control" exerted by society. Goffman thought that by tracing one's moral experiences, researchers could reveal a relatively objective view of an inherently subjective matter like moral choice.

Flyvbjerg: Practical Wisdom (phronesis)

Bent Flyvbjerg, Danish economic geographer and scholar of social science, studied (among other things) how power functions in the context of practice. He described his life-long

professional interest as uncovering the relationship between rationality and power by studying how "rationality and power relate in real decisions in real democracies as a context-dependent exercise" (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.143; Flyvbjerg, 1998, pp. 1-3). Resting heavily on Foucault's notion that power "is inseparable from its effects" Flyvbjerg sought to understand the flow of power by following what was done before, and before that, and before that (Flyvbjerg, 2001, pp. 113-117; Clegg & Pitsis, 2012, in Flyvbjerg et al. (Eds.), p. 72). He did so within a frame of Aristotle's intellectual virtues: episteme (theoretical knowledge), techne (craft knowledge) and phronesis (practical wisdom) – elevating phronesis as the most useful virtue for understanding the use of power as a practical ethic. A phronetic approach to analyzing power traces how it was transferred through a discourse that is always present (LaMagdeleine, 2016, p. 20-23). To reinforce an important point, Flyvbjerg asserted that power produces truth and is stronger than rationality; it does not discover the truth, it produces it. Eventually, in what he called "regimes of truth" reside the society that people accept and allow (Flyvbjerg, 2001, pp. 125, 155).

In a stinging critique of power's license to rationalize reality, Flyvbjerg's (1998) painstaking case study dissected a public transportation project in his hometown of Aalborg, Denmark, showing how the project bent to groups "who stood to gain from propagating lies about reality" to create the reality they wanted (p.230). The remedy, Flyvbjerg concluded, was not in more constitution writing but in "teaming up with like-minded people to fight for what you want" or for academics, conducting a case study that "lays open the relationship between rationality and power". Democracy is that simple and that difficult, he said (p.236).

Flyvbjerg said power could also be laid bare by demanding more "civic virtue" from leadership (1998, p.236). A first step in this endeavor must search for a phronetic wisdom in leadership to uncover what was actually done, not what should have been done. Leadership is not

just a thought exercise - action, or praxis, is also required and therefore traceable (Frank, in Flyvbjerg et al. (Eds), 2012, p. 52). But the researcher must ask "What is actually going on here"? Phronetic inquiry allows this kind of examination by asking what was ethically practical (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.55-57, 135-136). Practical ethics requires judgment, choice, and experience, in which the central ethical question becomes: What power produced this truth? To discover the answer, Flyvbjerg not only asked the Aristotelian ethical questions: Where are we going? Is it desirable? and What should be done? But also, Who gains? Who loses? Is it possible to change power relations? and Is it good to do so?

From Flyvbjerg's platform of phronesis as a civic virtue, political leaders must ask: What are my ethics "in relation to society when I act?" But because practical rationality dictates that judgement is always context dependent, the practical wisdom (phronesis) of situational ethics in each case must match the complex reality of an "infinite number of moves to be made…" What is the best possible action, not what is the right action. To elaborate further, a recent scholar (Burbules, 2019, p. 127) described phronesis as a "meta-virtue" that guides people in weighing which virtues are relevant in specific contexts. As a simple example, how does one weigh the values of honesty and friendship in the wake of a friend's haircut disaster? The capacity for practicing phronesis is a learned behavior, Burbules said, that cultivates a tolerance for trying and failing when solving dilemmas. The friend may forgive your honest bad-haircut comment - but he may not.

David Thacher (Thacher & Rein, 2004) professor of public policy at the University of Michigan, added to the breadth and value of a phronetic framework, especially when policy ambiguity creates conflicting policy goals. He asserted, like others, that experienced decision makers can rely on the practical reasoning of situated knowledge when deciding what should be

done. He proposed a way to improve public policy decision making with an approach that uses different strategies to address different policy choices. For example, in some cases a utilitarian measure of the greatest good is effective, but in others a do-no-harm ethic must prevail. Thacher concluded that resolving value conflicts is an "unfolding practice" shaped by the "vagaries of time, place, institutional location and context, whose force can be difficult to articulate" (Thacher, 2009, p.452). Even with practice this is not a fool-proof tactic, as public officials "can make poor judgements about the outcomes they really want to bring about" when they lack exposure to the lives of those their decision will affect. But Thacher said this "misconstrual" of actual outcomes can be mitigated by engaging a vivid and emotional understanding through a "first person perspective". Using a Flyvbjerg-like phronetic inquiry, he encouraged public leaders to scrutinize the narratives of other people's expertise and weigh it against their own.

LaMagdeleine: Leadership as Arts and Science

Sociologist and leadership scholar Don LaMagdeleine's angle on leadership study incorporates the ideas of the scholars I just reviewed. He said leadership is best understood as an application of situated knowledge (ala Flyvbjerg) in social settings (ala Goffman) that balances personal dispositions with social structures (ala Bourdieu). His book *The Leadership Imagination: An Introduction to Taxonomic Leadership Analysis* (2016, p. 4-13) labeled the study of leadership a "fledgling science" with not yet developed core assumptions. The purpose of his book was to move closer to that goal with a proposed approach to leadership scholarship that treats leadership as an "in-between phenomenon…" in which the leader applies a theoretical backdrop with a "situated approach" to the context at hand. Imaginative leaders are aware of "theoretical… models… [but are always] open the nuances of a particular context under

consideration…" (p. 21). In other words, leaders should develop a context-friendly, adaptable approach more akin to improvising jazz than memorizing the Fifth.

LaMagdeleine (2016, p. 2) applied this approach to studying messy leadership dilemmas; called a leadership imagination analysis, which recognized leadership as a combination of art and science that cannot be studied as either/or. He advanced a practical analytic approach that mapped the details of leadership dilemmas (p. 78-83). His colleague at St. Thomas University, David Rigoni (2002) took a subtly different approach to leadership studies with what he called, the Shaman's strategies. The Shaman is an expert at teaching what cannot be taught - the lessons that lie between the lines and knows that to know something one must become something. So, the Shaman patiently imparts learning through the myths and rituals of the thing the learner wants to become. He said teaching leadership should be the same.

Chapter Summary

This weighty chapter reviewed the scholarly arguments I intertwined in an analysis of the data in my dissertation. As a preview, I relied on Bourdieu's concept of habitus to reveal how a city's dispositions and habits grounded project leaders' successful strategy. Goffman's dramaturgical model, with front and backstage performances, framed an analysis of how project leaders used theatrical strategies to finagle financial support and maneuver a black swan event. And I responded to Flyvbjerg's powerful argument for meaningful social science by uncovering a phronetic leadership that navigated ethical responsibilities in a situated reality. The next chapter defines and defends my research methodology.

CHAPTER TWO

Research Methodology

… "social science is, after all, a practical activity" …
H. Becker, 1998, *Tricks of the Trade*

Introduction

This chapter defines and defends my methodological approach. Briefly stated, my approach used a grounded qualitative research strategy to conduct a normative case study about the strategies and practical wisdom local leaders relied on to lead an urban redevelopment project to its completion – specifically a new arts center. As an insider to this experience, I turned a researcher's gaze on my leadership of the project, using my insights to gain a deeper understanding of what actually happened. This methodology is consistent with the qualitative approach advocated by Flyvbjerg (2001) called phronetic social science research, which examines values as a departure for praxis, and is discussed below.

Interpretive Framework: A Search for Phronesis using a Dramaturgical Approach

The fundamental question in my case study was: what did it take to lead an effort to build an Arts Center in a mid-sized, Midwestern city in the US in the early 21st century? The ideas of two scholars anchored that question in an interpretative framework of phronetic social science – sociologists Bent Flyvbjerg and Don LaMagdeleine. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Flyvbjerg studied, among other things, the context of ethics in practice (especially in municipal megaprojects) and LaMagdeleine studied leadership as the intersection of science and art. Both argued for a new interpretive analytic approach called phronetic social science.

Flyvbjerg (Schram, S. & Caterino, B. (Eds.), 2006, pp. 1-16) rocked the social science world in the 1970's when he claimed that it cannot, and should not, emulate natural science methodology - empirical observation, experimentation, prediction, theory building. Instead, he sought to restore social science to its "classical position as a practical, intellectual activity that clarified problems, risks, and possibilities for humans and contributed to political practice" (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 1-4, 24; Flyvbjerg, 2012, p. 15-27). His quest for meaningful social science research was one grounded in context, judgement, and practical wisdom, all part of a situational ethics that examined what should be done in a particular time and place. In a phronetic methodological framework the researcher is compelled to uncover the judgements, choices, and experiences of the subjects under study.

In the same vein, leadership scholar Don LaMagdeleine (2016) said leadership is best studied as an application of situated knowledge. He called leadership studies a "fledgling science" but rejected scholarship that framed leadership methodologies as a search for typologies or sets of skills. Instead, scholars must look for an improvisational sense in their research subjects. LaMagdeleine also called upon Aristotle's phronesis, but interpreted as "prudence" - a reasoned state capable of judging what is good and bad for [people] (p.11). He said the scholar must unveil this prudence to understand the entirety of leadership.

Building on this foundation of a phronetic social science approach, I constructed an interpretive framework using Irving Goffman's dramaturgical analytic lens. As discussed in the previous chapter, Goffman's (1973) ideas about social space as a dramaturgical construct presented a model for understanding social action as a drama with front and backstage performances, meant not only to preserve the self, but the social order. As such, it was the

perfect model for parsing the rationalities behind the performances of the many actors in my study.

A dramaturgical lens has not frequently been used in sociological research in the U.S. However, a tedious search for dramaturgical methods in the St. Thomas University online reference database and in Google Scholar, yielded a sample of studies over the last two decades by European researchers. A dramaturgical framework was used in developing a public relations theory by scholars in Sweden (Johansson, 2007). In the UK, dramaturgy was used in an evaluative study of professional services (O'Brien et al., 2010). Dramaturgy also provided the framework for a study in Belgium into the staging of government meetings (Van Praet, 2009). A dramaturgical model of frontstage and backstage behavior was used in a study in New Zealand and the UK to analyze leadership discourse (Wilson, 2013). A study in Canada by Pettit (2011) argued that dramaturgy is an untapped resource as a research model among American sociologists, especially as applied to participant-observation methodology. Lastly, University of Edinburgh, UK researcher Freeman (2019) posited a pre-theory of the practice of policymaking in the "micro-level" interactions of meetings, talk, and text using Goffman's dramaturgy.

Two U.S. based scholars nudged Goffman's dramaturgy into a political science methodology – an area of particular interest to me. An early scholar at the University of California, Richard Merelman (1969) proposed a new conceptual framework of the dramatic characteristics and devices employed by political actors, suggesting it should become part of the traditional analysis of politics. Many decades later, University of Iowa professor and dramaturgist Art Borreca (1993) asked the question whether theatre was a metaphor for politics, or whether political phenomena - like stage, speech, and costume – merely generate a theatrical explanatory model. His argument did not devise a theatrical methodology, just an awareness of

theatre in politics. His bibliography of U.S. based researchers of political dramaturgy is extensive, but the most recent reference is dated 1990.

A Reflexive Statement

Before I continue, I pause to present my stance on the basic question of whether dramaturgy is a metaphor for how politics works. I agree, there are drama-like elements to the politician's everyday work - the right costume, the perfect hair, the profound speech, the dignified exit. But if politics is only theatre, then it is always fake - somewhere between real and made up. But in my experience, politics is both more than theatre and not always just theatre. More than theatre in the sense that there are real ethical dilemmas politicians face - shall we tear down low-income housing to build an arts center, for example. And not always theatre in the sense that there are many quiet tasks politicians perform that are far away from performance – dissecting this year's capital budget at the kitchen table after the kids go to bed, for example. I approached my dramaturgical analysis of this case with the stance that dramaturgy is a useful framework for thinking about how politics works, but there is much more to politics than made-up drama.

Methodological Framework

Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 129) offered sparse methodological guidelines for phronesis based social science research, but insisted it must include an examination of "what was said, and what was done, and by whom". Phronetic researchers are interested in values. But values research is easily stalled by the unsolvable tension between foundational and relative value rationalities – there is only one good way vs. any way is good to those who think it is good. Flyvbjerg offered a way to circumvent this conundrum in contextualism, in which the researcher uncovers a

situational ethics in the common views of a group acting in the context of their history and sociology. But this requires, as Clegg and Pitsis put it (in Flyvbjerg, Landman & Schram, 2012, p.67) "thousands of hours over many years of dedicated and detailed empirical enquiry…" But again, without offering a methodological framework. Though I had thousands of hours of dedicated knowledge of this project (as the reader will learn in the next chapter) I still did not have a methodological framework to turn on that long experience, and concluded that Flyvbjerg did not offer one.

LaMagdeleine's (2016, p. 78-83) methodological approach was more defined. His term "taxonomic leadership analysis" recognized that leadership as art and science must be studied as both. His core premise was the need to pull detailed data out of multiple sources and map the dilemmas that arise after they are thoroughly understood. His process builds on another methodological approach called grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) which proceeds through several methodological steps: immersive data collection from many forms; returning to the data throughout; and framing data patterns as conceptual metaphors. In short, the researcher must never stray far from her data.

These scholars offered important guidelines for a methodological approach, but I still needed a methodological framework. I found it in the normative case study, an approach that expands the conventional case study to capture an understanding of "important public values" that can lead people to change their minds about their ideals (Thacher, 2006, p.1632). In this sense the normative case study is not conducted by a detached reporter, it takes a stand and tries to convince. Thacher departed from those who thought sociological study could only answer "what is" by claiming it could also answer the normative question "what ought" because knowledge is not only observation but reflection. The elements of Thacher's approach can

include looking for consistency with general principles, juxtaposing cases to make analogies, or describing features of a case against a thick ethical concept (p.1669). A thick ethical concept is one that binds description with evaluation. He used the example “Capital punishment is cruel” in which” cruel” is the evaluative view bound to a descriptive concept “capital punishment”. I focused on the last element as the best response to the central question in my research – What did leaders do to build an Arts Center in their city?

Research Strategy

Qualitative research investigates the quality of a thing – a group, a city, a social encounter – and is well suited to social science investigation where deep understanding is preferred over forcing comparable characteristics of things that in reality share very few. Qualitative researchers use several different strategies to tease out the details they need - observation, in-depth interviewing, fieldwork, case work, and archival discovery (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). But the case study is perhaps the hallmark of a qualitative strategy and was the appropriate choice for this study. My stated goal was consistent with Maxwell’s (2013) criteria for case studies: to understand something using an interpretative approach of local causality by describing the events and processes that led to a specific outcome. My choice also responded to Flyvbjerg and LaMagdeleine’s call for situated social science research with a contextual case study. I did not conduct a comparative study (for example, of cities attempting similar redevelopment projects) or seek to generalize my findings (for example, as applicable to all redevelopment projects). Since the story was large and complex, I felt it would be difficult to establish comparable criteria across a large set of data. Though, as Thacher suggests, the normative case study can enlighten others about their own ideals and understandings. It is therefore possible that this case study may cause other leaders to reflect on their own leadership.

Context in qualitative research

A deep examination of context is another hallmark of qualitative research. As Bogdan and Biklen (2007, pp. 4-5) explain, qualitative researchers intentionally "go to a particular setting ….because they feel action can best be understood … in the setting it occurs [and further] to divorce the word or gesture from its context is … to lose sight of its significance". Also, in her argument for constructing a grounded theory approach, Charmaz (2014, p. 243) warned that "decontextualizing fosters oversimplification … and masks the significance of constructivist elements", which she argued grounded theory can and should produce. In other words, grounded theorists consistently return to data situated in a context. Further, in his book *Making Social Science Matter*, B. Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 42-47) staked a claim for an essential feature of qualitative research called "context – dependence." For Flyvbjerg this meant that context was not just a set of social rules waiting to be discovered, but that there were no rules at all. As he said, an "open-ended, contingent relation between contexts, actions, and interpretations" must be examined by the most diligent researcher. His research approach demands a very thorough account of how these elements affect each other in hopes that the smallest detail will uncover the secret to a whole story.

Further on context and consistent with Maxwell's philosophical position of critical realism – the world is real and independent of human thought, but our understanding is always constructed and rarely objective (p. 43) - I treated participant accounts as real, even when I experienced the same event with them but had a different interpretation. Yet, I could not ignore that I was known to them as a fierce supporter of the project at the center of my study. As a result, I took steps to overcome this obstacle by establishing an honest research relationship with each participant. This began with stating clearly what we both knew - I was a project leader. But

I also worked to gain their trust by listening intently and following their cues about where the interview would go next. Despite this, I brought a bias to the study, which the reader will likely see reflected in every chapter that follows. I take comfort, however, in Thacher and Flyvbjerg's affirmation that normative case studies are never a view from nowhere.

Participant Researcher

Social science methodology affirms that qualitative researchers can successfully navigate the position of participant researcher. For example, Charmaz (2014, pp. 159-160) discredited past norms directing researchers to put away their preconceptions. She challenged the researcher to reveal their perspectives and practices with a reflexive position in an open-minded inquiry about the data, including what one "takes for granted about self, the situation, and the world." In a slightly different stance, Sandra Harding's (2004, p. 136) standpoint theory, asserted that all knowledge is socially situated and thus all research must examine not only the subject's knowledge claims but reflect on the observers' and reflectors' too. That is, every researcher brings personal perspectives to research; it is better to acknowledge them than to pretend they do not exist or "lengthen the long arm of the researcher's gaze with a false separation".

Further, in a short transcription of one of Erving Goffman's lectures on fieldwork, Lyn Lofland (1989) offered a rare insight into the sociologist's stance on participant research. Goffman confessed the technique was not useful for every study, but when it was, it meant "subjecting yourself, your own body, and your own personality … to a set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals…" Goffman offered ways to improve research techniques for "getting into a place" and "exploiting a place" and that it could take at least a year to become deeply familiar and one might be discovered but should not be concerned. Interestingly, later

scholars (Pettit, 2011) connected Goffman's views on participant research to his interest in professional criminals called "confidence men". The Con Man cultivates insincerity for criminal gain, but Pettit concluded that Goffman's con man was at least in part virtuous when the good end justified the means.

Before I continue, a brief statement about my position as a participant researcher is necessary. I occupied a unique space in this study, somewhere between a "con man" and a long-armed researcher. I lived the total experience of the Arts Center, but not as a researcher, as a fierce leader. By the time I started writing this dissertation the Arts Center was a functioning enterprise. Though I can relive every defeat and triumph in painful detail, I was not researching at the same time I was living the experience. Therefore, I am not truly a con man. But neither am I a naïve researcher trying to "get into a place". I was already in a place; but now I turn around to look at it with a cooler gaze.

Maxwell (2013, p. 45-46) summed up the "insider as scholar" well. Quoting C. Wright Mills, he said scholars do not split their work from their lives… but use "each to enrich the other". Maxwell also advocated Strauss's approach of "critical subjectivity" which is a quality of awareness that does not suppress primary experience but is not overwhelmed by it either. Maxwell suggested using a tool he called "identity memos" throughout one's research to write down what one expects to find before beginning research. I used this tool often when preparing for interviews and observations, finding that it fostered the laser-like attention I needed to evoke the best data. I devised another unconventional mode of adding insight to the analysis by writing reflexive statements throughout this dissertation. They are meant to enrich the data as a window into my thoughts. I did so in response to Bourdieu's call for understanding the social world through a combination of outsider observations and primary practices:

> … we shall escape from the ritual either/or choice between objectivism and subjectivism … only if we are prepared to inquire into a … practical mastery which makes possible both an objectively intelligible practice and an objectively enchanted experience of that practice (Eisenberg, in Kivisto (Ed.), 2013, p. 349)

This practice is also consistent with qualitative research methods in the form of "reflective fieldnotes" and "observer comments" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 122-124, 163-164) calling for a more personal account by recording subjective feelings, hunches, and impressions.

Setting

The setting for this case study was a mid-sized city in the United States Midwest. The city was chosen because it was the site of the Arts Center project at the center of my study and is also the city I live in and served for fourteen years as a local elected official. The convenience of location and first-hand experience is hard to overstate, even if it resulted in a potential bias. I felt this bias was overcome by the advantage of my intimate knowledge of the city and the project. I withheld the city's actual name from all accounts, including in the titles of the public documents I referenced in the text. I assigned the pseudonym "Clearwater" to the city, but it has no connection to its actual name.

The project I studied was an Arts Center built in Clearwater's downtown at the confluence of two rivers. I called the project simply "The Arts Center" but this is not its actual name. When the project was complete, it replaced a gravel parking lot, several underused commercial buildings, and three historic buildings. The study's time frame began with the first idea for the Center and concluded with its construction and grand opening; a decade-long process from 2009 to 2018. The Center was designed as a shared operation between a non-profit arts organization and the local university, both had theatre venues replaced by the new Arts Center.

In essence, I tell this story exactly how it happened, changing a few details only when necessary to guard personal anonymity. This was true for the participants I interviewed and the people I described in the narrative who were part of the project but not study participants.

As expected, there were many people involved. Most of the drama is set during the critical tensions that arose when decisions had to be made about financially supporting the project. In the chapters that follow I refer to a core team of project supporters who employed various strategies to influence the outcome of those decisions to their benefit. The City Council played another role as one target of the core team's strategies. Citizens, both in support and opposition, also played a role, trying to sway votes one way or the other depending on their rationalities. In all however, the Arts Center was the main character; the people working to support or oppose it played supporting roles. Further, I did not treat the city as an organization or an institution, but as a geographic setting with legally defined borders within which residents enjoyed the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, including voting on this project.

Clearwater practices a Council/Manager form of local government. The City Council serves as the elected body and hires a City Manager to administer public services within their jurisdiction. Council Members (as titled by custom) are charged as policy makers with legislative functions that include setting a tax rate, approving an annual budget, and establishing public policy. The City Council also has authority to borrow money and was asked to do so for the Arts Center project. Decisions by the City Council are binding within the statutory powers of local governments in a Federal system that separates and shares power among Federal, State and Local levels.

Participant Selection

To protect the anonymity of participants, I disguised the names and personal characteristics of all participants. I did not use proper names in any circumstance. When descriptors may have identified an individual, I took the liberty of changing certain situational details about them. To further protect anonymity, I used the universal female pronouns “she” and “her” and the possessive pronoun “hers” throughout.

I employed a strategy of purposeful selection to limit my interviews to people who were directly involved in the Arts Center project. I began with the people most intimately involved, a small group I called the project partners. I moved from that intense involvement in incremental steps outward to people who were involved in varying degrees. The people who joined the project partners in leading the project I called the core team. The core team vigorously participated in, or influenced the decision making of elected bodies. I considered myself among this group. Citizen supporters and adversaries formed the last two groups. I chose citizens who actively participated in support or defeat of the project. Specifically, I limited citizen interviews to those who contacted the City Council in one of several ways: speaking at a council meeting, sending an email or letter, writing to the newspaper, or posting on social media.

I also interviewed people who were affected by the project either as a downtown business, a service agency, or as urban residents, but this group was fewer in number than I hoped for. I interviewed one person from the State Legislature, but I was not able to interview executive branch leaders in State Government, though I attempted to by letter and phone call. Nor was I able to interview the primary citizen adversary in Clearwater, who did not respond to my invitation. I represented this person’s thoughts either from direct written communications

made in public, such as recorded statements from public hearings; observations of public comment at public meetings; or coverage of statements in the newspaper. Lastly, two City Council Members refused to participate.

I conducted 51 intense, one-on-one interviews. The participants ranged in age from 30 to almost 80 and were a mix of gender and ethnicity, as reflective of the population in the city. All of them lived in or close to Clearwater at the time of their interview, but less than a third were born in the city. Their occupations varied – business owner, artist, teacher, elected official, attorney, social service, public administration, finance, development, retired, or unemployed. I also convened one focus group of young professionals between the ages of 20 and 40, who had lived in Clearwater less than five years. The uniting characteristic among all the participants was active involvement in the Arts Center project.

The City Council as a participant group requires a bit more description. Clearwater's City Council reflected the community in its mix of gender, ethnicity, and age – with a skew toward members 50 and older. Their individual length of service varied, but the Council that made decisions about the Arts Center had a collective 41 years of public service experience. However, the City Council that made the first decision was not the same Council that made the final decision. I dealt with this reality by concentrating on Council decisions that evoked the most controversy (discussed in detail in later chapters), interviewing Council Members who served at the time those decisions were made and who agreed to be interviewed. Five of the eleven Council Members served during the entire decision-making process.

Validity and Data Integrity

The participant group provided credible data by willingly and accurately capturing their experiences during our interviews. Maxwell (2013, p. 122) supported this "commonsense" approach to ensuring validity in qualitative research. I did not interview people with only a casual knowledge of the project, thinking I would not solicit the deep understanding I wanted. The Arts Center project was complex; it was essential to hear from the people who had the strongest connection to it so I could ground the story in this intense experience. (See the Epilogue for a discussion about other possible approaches to future study.) I realize this approach may have threatened what Becker (1998, p. 90-92) advised in looking for the full range of a phenomenon – not just the top of a ranked group. But I countered this by following his advice to criticize knowledge with a researcher's gaze and inquire where participant's data came from. I am satisfied that my approach adhered to my research goal, which was to understand how the people who made a thing happen did that. I wanted to tell their story. There are other stories to be told about the Arts Center.

Data Collection

I used three modes of data collection – conducting intense interviews, observing City Council meetings on YouTube, and reading written accounts in the newspaper or on a social media platform. I triangulated these inputs to verify validity among data sets whenever I could (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126).

The bulk of my data collection was conducted in intense, one-on-one interviews and in one focus group. I used a semi-structured approach that aimed to put the participants at ease (Maxwell, 2013). Most of the interviews were conducted in my home, where privacy was ensured. I prepared a set of open-ended questions prior to each interview; it served as a guide

rather than a script. I began each interview with a welcoming question, which asked them to tell me about themselves and why they came to live in this city. This opening question set us both at ease and I was surprised by how willing they were to share their history. As the interview progressed, I referred to my general list of questions, but relied heavily on my ability to adjust the interview as participants presented other insights. Some were more willing than others to answer "why" type questions, for example – why didn't you fight harder, or why did you fight so hard? I interviewed half a dozen people more than once.

I also observed six City Council meetings on YouTube. Clearwater used a community television agency to record council meetings gavel-to-gavel. The meetings were archived on the community television server and made accessible with permission for general viewing on YouTube. City Council meetings are public meetings and open to the public under Open Meetings Law, but not all cities have the financial resources to contract with a recording service. Clearwater did so for many years. I chose the six meetings because they covered intense public input on select Arts Center decisions. I made detailed observer comments while watching over 20 hours of City Council meetings. As City Council President, I was also present at those Council meetings in real time, but not as a researcher.

I also searched local newspaper coverage of the Arts Center project in articles between May 2012 and September 2019 in which the project was in the title, or someone connected with the project was mentioned in the article. I read 94 articles that met these criteria. I also perused two social media sites – one in support of the project, one opposed. I followed each site's active posts and subsequent comments from the original launch to the time they were taken down, making note of content and tone. The page in support of the project was launched in October 2013, the one opposed in January 2014. Neither site is active at present.

Ethical Considerations

Interviews were conducted in private settings – most in my home. Each lasted between one and two hours, more often two. I recorded the interviews on my cell phone using a paid audio recording/transcription service REV.com. Participants were invited to be interviewed by letter, which included a consent form that was approved by St. Thomas University. Before each interview began, participants signed the consent form and gave verbal permission to be taped. When each interview concluded, the transcripts were exported to the online transcription service and returned verbatim to my email inbox within 48 hours. I downloaded each interview to my home computer; it is password protected so I am the only person with access. The verbatim transcripts did not include the participants' names; if the participant used a proper name, I deleted it before I saved to my computer. I also made paper copies, which I kept in a binder away from any intrusion. The transcription service did not maintain transcripts in any form. The transcripts still reside on my home computer but will be destroyed upon completion of my dissertation. I will safely maintain paper copies forever.

Data Analysis

A strong qualitative study always returns to the data (Charmaz, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). So, within 24 hours of receiving a verbatim interview transcript, I read it in its entirety, making detailed margin notes using a descriptive approach rather than interpretive. As Becker suggests, this prevents forcing data into "pre-accepted categories" (Becker, 1998, p. 85). After this, I built a matrix of the range of participant statements along a continuum of support or opposition. The matrix assigned the strongest supporters with the descriptor "rabid champions" who were certain the Arts Center would have a positive effect on the city and gave everything they had to make it

succeed. This was a small data set of only ten people. I grouped other supporters into two groups "hopeful champions" or "cautious champions". They hoped the Arts Center would succeed but wanted to protect the public investment if it did not and thought the project would be good for downtown business and the city's future. The cautious champions were less willing than the hopeful champions to offer personal financial support. These two groups formed the largest number of participant responses, 35 out of the 51 interviewed. I also assigned the opposition to two groups "fiscal opponents" and "steamrolled opponents". They opposed the project primarily on a fiscal argument of not being an appropriate public expenditure. They also felt steamrolled by the process. These two groups included nine participants. The participant groups I selected reflected the sentiments of the general population more than not, as evidenced by the successful passage of two local referenda by a 60/40 margin, the 6:1 favorable spread in citizen contacts received by the City Council, and unquantified supportive opinions circulated on social media and in the printed press.

Simultaneous to assigning participants to a matrix of support/opposition, I clumped the verbatim interviews under general themes that emerged from the data. Examples of themes included: description of project, value of the arts, city memories, experiences downtown, winners and losers, movers and shakers, purpose of government, do this again, and people left out, etc. Clumping the data under themes allowed me to compare interviews across a range of input. It was a useful exercise for parsing the large amount of data I collected. After some time passed, I went back to each interview transcript and wrote a narrative analysis of each, summarizing what I thought each participant said in a one or two-page statement. This exercise produced a flowing narrative that often-included my insights - called observer comments in qualitative research.

Because I recognized that my position as a city leader and supporter could have caused participants to refrain from criticizing the project in front of me, I took extra steps to ensure validity by offering them an avenue for further anonymity. After I wrote the narrative analysis, I sent it to participants, along with a document I called a "validity letter" asking them to verify whether I had captured their thoughts accurately. If I had not, I included a stamped envelope so they could return a corrected response to me. I addressed the envelope to myself and instructed them to send it back to me without a return address, or their name. This increased participants' opportunity to answer questions anonymously. Five participants returned letters with their clarified thoughts.

I relied on Charmaz (2014) to conduct a detailed analysis of the verbatim interviews, using a coding matrix I built. After assigning headings to a long matrix, I entered data under appropriate headings that included: What people talked about (themes); what they said (quotes); what words they used (initial or emic coding); what I thought their words meant (focused or etic coding), and how their responses connected. This laborious process produced over 100 pages of organized data. Nevertheless, the organizational scheme allowed me to digest large amounts of data and discover the strategic value-rationalities that arose from it. As noted in the sample matrix below, the progression of data from left to right moved from verbatim responses to more abstract ideas, eventually ending with possible applicable theoretical concepts. Inspired by LaMagdeleine's taxonomic methodology, this method was also consistent with grounded qualitative research.

SAMPLE of EMPTY MATRIX

What are people talking about	What are people saying	What words did they use	What do I think their words meant	How do their responses connect	How are responses reflected in a	How might responses be

– developing themes					**contextual narrative**	**explained by theory**
Organizing Categories	*Verbatim responses*	*Substantive Categories: initial coding*	*Theoretical categories: focused coding*	*Connecting Categories*	*Narrative Analysis*	*Theoretical Coding*

Limitations

Despite my actions to the contrary, this study had limitations. I consider the most significant was that I am a new researcher. I expended every bit of energy I had and my best intellect to write a meaningful study, but a novice researcher is a novice researcher. The reader should therefore be aware that a more sophisticated outcome was possible.

Two other limitations bear comment. The first is, though I defended my position as participant researcher, it is certain that my political title, fierce leadership, and considerable political capital influenced what the participants were willing to say. I am certain many did not want to offend a project that had my name stamped on it. I worked to overcome this limitation by ensuring that participants trusted the study's anonymity and by relying on the valuable insights of this old and slightly-worn-out politician as an essential counterbalance. Lastly, I think it may have been an oversight on my part that I did not seek out more participants who opposed the project. I was correct in limiting my interview pool to people who had a direct and lasting connection to the project, but I could have tried harder to convince more of the ardent opponents to grant me an interview – though I am confident I captured those who met my participation criteria.

CHAPTER THREE

My Moral Career: Even the Mighty Oak Might Bend a Little in the Wind

> The text becomes a mirror in which [the scholar] sees only [herself]. As Nietzsche put it, scholars dig up what they themselves buried.
>
> Alan Bloom, 1968, *The Republic of Plato*

Introduction

I do not remember when I first became interested in saving Democracy. Maybe in elementary school when the country believed Russia might drop an atomic bomb on our heads. As school children we practiced civil defense drills in our classrooms. Or maybe in high school when I marched in Vietnam War protests while my classmates awaited their draft number. Or maybe when I wept with the country after JFK and MLK were assassinated or cringed with the country at President Nixon's disgraceful peace-sign departure from the landing of Airforce One. Or maybe it was in college, where I communed with other political science majors over our utopian democratic dreams. Or maybe it was none of these. Maybe my affection for Democracy came to me over time, seeping into my thinking and eventually demanding my energy. It sounds pretty schmaltzy, but I brooded about democracy long before I became involved in saving it. But when I did, I wanted what de Tocqueville wanted - to show what a democratic people really was and could be.

Decades later I am still interested in saving Democracy, but now I know why. I am certain it is the best hope for holding the country together without guns or a fence. The sublime logic of it is simple – holding decision makers close to their decisions affecting the fundamental tension between personal freedoms and the common good. This delicate tension must be tended

by leaders, which I thought was my task. Readers will detect my passion to tend Democracy in the pages that follow. It is my bias and I bring it to this study.

Early Political Experience in Town Governance

I moved to Clearwater for the same reason many participants in my study did – a job. In 1977 I left a large city in a southern state to live closer to my childhood home, which is also a large city, but in the Midwest. My husband and I set down roots in a smaller city about an hour away from my old stomping grounds; it was the smallest city I had ever lived in. My job working as an RN on a demanding surgical unit and starting a family occupied the first ten years of our life in Clearwater. Eventually, when both job and family seemed more stable, I was encouraged to run for the Town Board, which I did in 1993.

Town Boards govern towns, which are smaller and more rural than cities. They perform regular civic leadership duties like approve annual budgets, ensure safety, maintain roads, and manage land growth. My campaign for Town Supervisor was simple. We sat with our friends at the kitchen table stuffing letters into envelopes that introduced my platform and asked for money. I said I would listen, and I knew how to make tough decisions. After a short campaign, I won the election, taking my place on a five member Town Board – four men and me. And indeed, we listened and made tough decisions. During my service I learned how to weigh what citizens said against what I heard from staff and what I saw for myself. I learned to deliver concise arguments. I learned to be brave and vote the way I thought right not to please anyone. Most importantly, I learned to not take opposition to my ideas personally - the thick skin principle in the game of the end justifies the means. I served two terms on the town board.

Honing My Decision-Making Skills

During those two terms, I applied for and was appointed to positions on the Housing Authority and the Plan Commission. Housing Authorities administer Federal Housing programs like Section 8 that help people in low income find and afford housing. I worked with a very accomplished staff who performed the day-to-day work of screening applicants and ensuring compliance with Federal guidelines. The board made policy decisions about the agency's direction and heard challenges from people in the program who the staff argued must be evicted because of a rule violation. Sometimes we agreed with staff; sometimes we did not. Sometimes we overturned their eviction decision and gave a tenant another chance, but it irked staff when we did. Despite these disagreements we remained a team because each side understood the role of the other. From this experience I learned to be diplomatic and defend the decisions I felt were right. I learned it is possible to disagree and still work together effectively. I served on the Housing Board for ten years.

At the same time, I was appointed to the city's Plan Commission. Plan Commissions are entities of local government enabled by State Law to oversee land-use regulations and plan the city's future land use, especially its utility expansion – water and sewer. Their most important function is creating and regularly updating a city's Comprehensive Land Use Plan (the Plan). Developing the Plan requires tremendous local effort and serves as the seminal authority for land-use decisions; but is not infallible. For example, the Plan Commission can override land use regulation by granting easements for non-compliant uses, and sometimes alter the entire Plan by adding chapters that expand the city's focus. For example, over time, Clearwater added sustainability and public health chapters to their Plan.

I was one of a nine people on the Plan Commission appointed by the City Council by local ordinance. It was demanding service because it met twice a month and tackled difficult issues like boundary disputes and zoning violations. Not long after I was appointed, a large downtown public park project came before the Commission. The city owned the land and had spent considerable money cleaning up a contaminated landfill on the site. Now it wanted to develop the land into a public park. In later chapters the reader will learn much more about this project, but here I use this experience to point out that this complex project challenged my decision-making skills. The public had very distinct wishes for the park – access to the riverfront, passive winding pathways, a rest room and later a Farmer's Market. These did not match what city engineers thought possible, or what funds would allow.

The Plan Commission held many public hearings and waded through detailed reports from city staff about the purpose and function of urban public spaces. Eventually, with guidance from the Comprehensive Plan, we approved the first major public improvement in downtown Clearwater in 30 years. It gave citizens much of what they wanted balanced against a realistic funding scenario. I honed many skills in the process – how to digest complex engineering documents and topographical maps, and how to weigh the interplay of zoning and vision – in essence, how little details affect the larger picture. I learned to be patient and attend to timing. I learned how to work with staff to satisfy their regulatory fervor while trying to incorporate the public's creative ideas. I served on the Plan Commission for seven years.

Political Experience on the City Council

Having drawn the attention of Clearwater's citizens with my public service, in 2003 I was encouraged to run for city council. I lost my first election bid but ran again the next year and won. In 2004 I took my place on an eleven-member city council as an at-large Council Member, meaning I represented the entire city. For the next five years I honed more skills as a levelheaded decision maker while becoming familiar with the functions of the city organization and learning to interact with citizens. During this time, I remained on the Plan Commission and began service on a downtown development board that supported downtown businesses. Its mission was to promote downtown through grants to local business, sponsoring festivals, and participating in statewide downtown improvement organizations. I felt very strongly about strengthening downtown, which was suffering from declining retail, a neglected riverfront, and lack of capital investment from both private and public sectors. (Except for the public park I wrote about in a previous paragraph.) My vision for Clearwater's downtown saw it at its best: rich with ideas, full of creativity, open to strangers and friends, breathtakingly beautiful, and affordable to live in. I wanted downtown to be all that.

City Council President

In 2009 I used the experience I gained on City Council, and all the courage I could muster, to run for City Council President. The Council President is the chief elected officer in Clearwater's Council/Manager system of local government. Clearwater does not have a mayor. I won the election, and at my first meeting as President I moved to the center seat on the Council dais. I rapped the gavel. I sat up straight, looked the citizens in the eye, and acted more confident than I felt – a habit that would serve me well throughout my elected career. By this time, I felt I had done enough learning; it was time to teach. It was time to stamp my imprint on the office of

Council President as the first woman in the city to be elected Council President by popular vote. Two other women served as President decades earlier, but they were elected by the Council.

Holding it all Together

Over the years I used the office of Council President to advance Democracy in a city I had great affection for. I figured I could do my bit to save Democracy by modeling good leadership that would increase confidence in government. I started with the premise that Council meetings were important symbols of good government. For some citizens they were the only time they would interact with local government. Our behavior could build trust and confidence, or it could break it down. For that reason, I used my presidency to teach elected officials and citizens how to hold civil council meetings. I opened every meeting with the reminder that the Council was there to listen to people, not grill or belittle them. This approach paid off over the years as we worked through many contentious public meetings, including the long process I write about in this study. I am proud that even when angry citizens protested outside city hall (we marched in some too), or sued us, or chastised us in the press, we never lost our cool in public. We were holding this little bit of Democracy together.

I did other things too to model good leadership in a Democracy. I said yes to every request of my office – every single one. As President I: milked cows at annual Chamber breakfasts; addressed a Girl Scouts Women of Distinction award banquet after receiving the honor; traveled with business and higher education leaders to the state capital to advocate for Clearwater; delivered nine annual State of City addresses; spoke at a sustainability rally on an environmental cleanup site; welcomed a bee keeper association; painted an original landscape for

the children's museum; danced with the stars for the children's theatre; and spoke at nearly 200 ribbon cuttings marking the opening of new businesses in the city.

I also started some community initiatives. I created a fund at the community foundation to raise money for waterfront projects; we built the second accessible fishing pier in the city. I introduced legislation to install the first electric vehicle charging stations in the city; but I was ahead of my time. I founded Democracy's Daughters, a group of women who turned our concern over a flailing national Democracy into local advocacy. Our first project was a local circuit court judge race, which our candidate won. And I started a 501C3 to raise funds for addressing practical problems faced by people living with homelessness. Our first project worked with an agency to house almost 30 people who were chronically homeless. All these things I did to show people a style of leadership that I thought was good for Democracy. I wanted them to see a hard-working, practical, keeping it all together with a don't-let-up attitude kind of leadership that worked for the city. In watching me they would have confidence in their city government, and confidence in Democracy. The tag line of my presidency was: Clearwater, A City that Works.

All is not Rosy

In case this all sounds a little too good to be true, I made plenty mistakes too. One was not being particularly good at helping fellow Council Members. People who run for elected office have strong personalities - they need one to survive the campaign. Since I have one too, I assumed they would use theirs to get the work done. I was prepared for that kind of working relationship but not for molding it in others.

I served as Council President for nine years and on the City Council for fourteen. As the years crawled by, leadership became lonelier. I think over time I became more impatient with the

lesser experience and parochial initiatives of newly elected officials. It seemed every election cycle there was a new batch of fresh faces wanting desperately to accomplish things. Eventually I became tired; I was not willing to circle back to try something we had tried 55 times before, so I forged ahead.

It is possible, however, that this dogged determination ultimately cost me my position. Not far into my last term as President, one Council Member wanted to change our meeting protocol to allow family members on the dais during meetings. This included breastfeeding infants. Citing past practice and current protocol, I felt I could not allow people other than Council and staff on the dais. I said no to her request but made other accommodations for her, and future Council Members, to participate in meetings from the Council floor, but not on the dais. In response, she hired an attorney and threatened a lawsuit. In response to that, I took the matter to City Council as a whole, who sided with my decision. But the action led to a campaign by the advocates of the changed protocol to fill seats with like-minded Council Members in the next election. They succeeded.

After a spring election that swept almost half the Council out of office, I realized that this was going to be a very hostile place for me as Council President. There would be no acceptable leadership that came from me, so I resigned. My press release was short: Finding I can no longer govern in a manner to which the City has become accustomed and that I think is best, I resign my position today. The voters have signaled their preference for a type of leadership I cannot deliver. A lady always knows when it is time to leave the party (press release, June 12, 2018). About a year later a new City Council passed a resolution allowing family members of all ages, and other invited guests on the dais during Council meetings.

Am I a Feminist?

I have at times been asked if I am a feminist. For those not able to discern the obvious answer, I have a rather lengthy reply. My professional curriculum vitae could be seen as the model for traditional female work: a nurse for ten years, a high school teacher for four, a librarian for two, and a mother throughout – the latter which until the 2020 pandemic was not really considered work. I learned things from each experience; from nursing, kindness; from teaching, patience; from librarianship, finding just the right thing; from motherhood, well…

I used every one of these skills - but sat up straighter - when I arrived at my last job as a local public leader, which I did for 26 years. There, I developed an approach to female leadership that modeled a smart and calm determination. I am at the age to have born my share of the ubiquitous and subtle dismissal women abide; though I did not experience the worst of it, as I am white and from the Midwest. Nonetheless, my leadership drive was to put a stop to the dismissal women experience. Not by ignoring it, but by showing it would not be tolerated. Which is in part, why I said yes to everything I was asked to do. Everywhere I went, I took up as much space as I could and absorbed as much energy I could by acting more confident than I felt and knowing more stuff than any other person in the room. These tactics worked for me most of the time. I think that makes me a feminist, but others can decide.

But now, back to my leadership saga, which continues with the story of my leadership of the redevelopment project at the center of this study.

My Leadership of the Project at the Center of This Study

In 2010, one year after taking office as Council President, I was pulled into an exciting project in Clearwater. In Chapter Five the reader will learn more, but here I briefly explain my

involvement as way of defending my motives for being its champion. In the paragraphs that follow I first narrate my story, then I apply a researcher's neutral gaze to analyze my narrative.

A Short Story of the Project

On May 15, 2012, a press conference was held to make the first public announcement about a project to redevelop property on the south shore of the confluence of two rivers in downtown Clearwater – an area the city had been trying to revitalize for over 20 years. The project envisioned an arts performance and education center, shared between the city and the local university. I titled it simply - The Arts Center project. The City Council had been briefed on the project in closed session a week earlier, and I, even earlier in my role as Council President. The press conference organizers invited me to speak, which I accepted. My remarks defined my approach over the course of the entire project and directed all the actions I took.

> I am happy to be invited to say a few words today. The Council was recently made aware of the details of this project. We quickly recognized it as a tremendous opportunity for [Clearwater].
>
> Indeed, a rare opportunity to forge a cooperative arrangement has been offered the city by which it can develop a much-needed project that is already soundly supported by several land use plans aimed at revitalizing downtown. The new performing arts center, mixed-use development, and improved public space along the waterways will create a city center for everyone to enjoy.
>
> The City has a proven habit of sharing costs and services. We created the Shared Service Commission a few years ago to help us continue moving forward with that goal… [Projects that came out of that commission] prove that [Clearwater] is a model for hammering out ways to work together.
>
> The City Council looks forward to evaluating the public benefits of the project as we participate in this exciting idea. Once again [Clearwater] has shown that it is a city that works – this time toward a shared investment that benefits our city center.
>
> Press conference speech Council President, May 15, 2012

I felt justified in making these public statements after participating in several closed session briefings where I detected a cautious excitement from Council about the prospect of leaving a legacy of downtown redevelopment; but my political experience suggested that it was not going to be smooth sailing. A portend of things to come was recalled in an interview with one former City Council Member.

> … some of the next-level managers… were not real gung-ho about it… When they had the press conference…that day in 2012 and you gave a little speech, [a city department director] said to me: The city isn't for this just because the City Council President gave a speech.
>
> Interview of former Council Member 8/24/2019

Things that Must Be Done

The way I saw it, we had four tasks ahead us if there was any chance of winning approval for the Arts Center: be honest about the scope of the project, demand shared decision making, build public support from values, and secure financial buy in. The first task started with using honest and consistent language. It was important to say the words "Arts Center", not civic or event center. I felt it was wrong to pretend we were not building a center for the arts. We must also be clear about was going to happen there - local artists and major events would perform, the university would house its theatre department, many music genres would pass through, and there would be space for literary and visual arts. And much of the building was to be open to the public.

The second task was pushing a model of shared decision making. In the press conference I reminded people that we were already accustomed to sharing things like athletic fields, a law enforcement center, and a public health department, to name a few. Using the word "shared" would connect people to something we were already good at. To that end, I set up a task force of local artists and project partners who worked through the mechanics of how best to use a shared

space and create a fair calendar. Eventually this task force became the governing entity that operates the Arts Center today.

The third important task was building public support. I felt the best approach was to show that the project matched Clearwater's values – things she thought were important. Part of that effort meant building good data, so economic development experts computed the impact of the project on growth in downtown. Their data is presented in more detail in Chapter Six. Another part meant soliciting the testimonies of civic groups about how great we were at cooperating; it was part of our DNA. We rolled out story after story about cooperation between government and business, and between government entities. A final ingredient meant highlighting citizen participation in downtown redevelopment plans to show our long history of valuing downtown and the arts was part of our culture.

The fourth task, as I saw it, was securing funding. The Arts Center was not going to be inexpensive. No single entity could afford to build it alone, so we must work together. I felt my responsibility in this task was winning Council approval for local public funding. I delivered on that task, but only after surviving a lawsuit, dueling citizen referenda, an accusation of open records violation, and scathing social media campaigns. Securing local funding allowed us to persuade the State Legislature and the Governor to help fund the project. We trudged across the state 66 times, it seemed, to plop ourselves right in the face of decision makers. These exhausting trips paid off, coupled with a bit of good luck, when we brought $15 million in state funding to the project. It should also be noted that a significant local philanthropic effort yielded more than $30 million at the time of this writing. I was not a part of that effort, except as a contributor.

Celebrating the End of the Beginning

On October 6, 2016, the new Arts Center broke ground with a public celebration. I was invited to speak again. An excerpt of my speech said:

> … We can rightly say ***we*** built this arts center! All of us. No one person can claim the honor. We all did it. The idea came from you. The money came from you. The energy came from you.
>
> This building is tangible evidence that we value the arts and will go to great lengths to hold it up… This building will be grand. And it will be ***from*** all of us…. but what is inside is ***for*** all of us…
>
> This ceremony marks the end of planning and the beginning of construction. But we cannot rest just yet….Maybe in 20 years when the Arts Center is STILL a center for the arts, we can finally breathe a sigh of relief, and say well done.
>
> But today let's celebrate that, in 2016 something happened in [Clearwater] that changed everything. In our time, we built something important that changed everything.
>
> Good work fellow citizens. Good work. We are a city that works.

For those who have never delivered a political speech before, I want to say that politicians know their speeches are not entirely true. We know that many details and difficulties are glossed over, but that is not the point of a speech like this one. A speech like this one is meant to reassure people that we did the right thing – a good thing – and we did it together. We needed people to remain inspired for the work that still lay ahead. After all, we had been constantly scolded by the opposition that the Arts Center would fail. And some do, to be sure. But not this one. I wanted badly for this one to succeed.

Construction of the Arts Center began the day after this groundbreaking celebration. A full two years later, the Arts Center opened its doors on September 18, 2018. 5,000 people poured through mile-high glass doors to see the inside for the first time. But I was not invited to speak this time because I had resigned my position as Council President three months earlier. Former leaders are not invited into the promised land, unless they are much more famous than I.

Instead, on this day, I was allowed in the back door by the Arts Center manager and slinked around the backstage peeking out from the curtain to smile a little smile of accomplishment. I wrote a speech the Chancellor delivered for me. It said how proud I was of what we accomplished together. But for me the opening had to be celebrated as a personal triumph.

There is a very tall display of donors carved on a wall in the Arts Center lobby that has my name and title on it. It is the only name with a title. I hope when future generations see that title, they think that she must have been an important leader of this project. I hope I was.

The Researcher's Neutral Gaze

I end this chapter with a meta-reflection on the narrative I just offered, to illustrate that I am a credible insider scholar. This is not a summary, but an "arms' length" researcher's gaze on what I said about my leadership values, my dogged determination, and my hard-won street smarts.

My Leadership Values

I began the chapter with a strong statement about valuing Democracy. In fact, I think this value underlies the entirety of my leadership drive. But I adhere to a practical Democracy in which the public is respected and included, but leadership is required – the representative Democracy James Madison championed in the Federalist Papers. Though some argue that direct democracy is the only worthy enterprise, I think it is not an effective way to govern complex entities like cities (see direct democracy at www.britannica.com). In this chapter I offered examples of how this value respecting the public played out in what I did: I modeled respect in civil behavior at Council meetings, included opportunities for public engagement in planning, and said yes to representing the city in every speaking request I received.

Even so, I fell short of the participation ideal advocated by those who want more democracy and confess there were people I did not respect enough to include. Scholars of Democracy like Gayatri Spivak (2010) said there are always people no one thinks to ask; people who do not speak and do not know they can speak. An honest self-critique must admit that until I was reminded by the stinging words of one study participant, I had not considered my omission.

> Of the two kinds of good for the community, the Arts Center was greater than people who aren't contributing economically to the city. It's a values thing. I'm unhappy about it. 30 people lived in a building with bad plumbing and bugs but it was better than the streets. It was torn down, now it's a vacant lot and some of them live under a bridge. People in the building had mental health issues that didn't make it easy to access resources. One man never left the building in 20 years. It's a difficult population who suffer loss of income, mental illness and addiction. [Leaders] turning their back I think is probably a good way to put it. It's a difficult problem when you see this beautiful bright star shinning and just want to push the muck out of its way. So, I think the people in power care, but it's down here.

Despite this omission, I am adamant that leaders must rely on their own judgement, not simply mirror public sentiment. There are examples of this value in the chapter as well: weighing the expertise of city staff, using data to inform decision making, gaining clout with other city leaders, defending my decisions with clear and concise rationale. For me, leadership in a Democracy must make people feel valued, but their value is not infallible. Instead, leaders should weigh public input with other ingredients, like information and expertise. I learned to listen – weigh – decide.

Must the Show Go On?

An abiding characteristic of my leadership as Council President was a dogged determination. A former Council Member I interviewed corroborated this when she said "… I don't think [everybody] was really [supportive] of this project, that's why it was you. You were the one who made this project happen … I don't know how exactly. You just made s--- up". It

was true; I had never built an Arts Center before, none of us had. I am still not sure how we did it. I suspect dogged determination was part of it – devising new and nimble strategies when things didn't work out, like trudging back and forth across the state to put our faces right in front of state leaders or including local artists in creating the plan to operate the Arts Center. I just kept trying things because the show must go on.

There were times, I admit, when I wondered if the show must go on. If I should accept the way things were and let downtown come to life without me. Happily, I was quickly jolted from this temporary state by the like-minded support of other strong-willed women, like this letter from my mom,

> I was surprised when you might give up the fight for your city. Don't, not when you're feeling defeated by unkind words and actions. If you feel the cause is just (as I think it is) then conquer you must. If your plan doesn't work the city will go on but it won't be as competitive as it would with this investment in arts and culture, and concern for all groups of people. And another thing when will [Clearwater] get another offer such as this? And another thing if you don't take the offer somebody else will. You want to become a welcoming community, not just a wealthy one. PS: It's taken me so long to write this letter, the temperature rose 8 degrees. Mom.
>
> February 2013

It is possible, however, that this determination was not always well received, especially by my fellow Council Members, and most likely cost me a sentimental retirement party.

Hard Won Street Smarts

In his book *The Leadership Imagination: An introduction to taxonomic leadership analysis*, LaMagdeleine (2016, p. 11) said that political leadership "requires a steady prudence that results from experiencing many types of situations and working one's way through them." He was discussing Aristotle's "phronesis" as an epistemology of practical wisdom that is without universal laws or a final product. I said much more about this concept in Chapter One, but refer

to it again to underscore the trajectory of my leadership practice as an accumulation of street smarts. I offered many examples in this chapter: learning to digest complex documents, understanding how city departments work together by getting to know the staff, delving into the details and knowing when to play the "detail" card, and understanding the usefulness of an uplifting speech. As the Arts Center project unfolded, I could see what had to be done, not because I sat down at the beginning to write a ten-year play book, but because I kept my eyes on the prize and my feet on the ground, navigating black swans when they lighted in my path.

I learned these leadership street smarts on the job. They were my greatest strength. It took 25 years to perfect, but by the end no one was telling me that we had tried something 55 times before because I knew exactly what to do before it was too late to do it.

Do as I say, not as I do: The Truth About my Leadership Ethics

This last meta-reflection briefly explores one more dimension of my leadership - my decision-making ethics. Lacking adequate space for a long discussion, I ask the reader to accept a short statement of my ethical stance. I think personal ethics, based on a morality of right or wrong, are adequate for personal decision making, but the political leader must rely on more than her private morals to guide her leadership. She must also be intimately aware of, if not always reflect, the values of the community if she wants to find its good end. But this is not easy, because leaders often must choose not just the good end, but between equal or opposing good ends – shall we build an arts center, or a homeless shelter, or an innovative technology think tank? I am closely aligned with the Pragmatist view of ethics, especially advanced by John Dewey (in Fesmire, 2003, p.10-13) as "appraising social habits … with an ongoing moral maturation that evaluates … circumstances." Fesmire calls Dewey's approach a "moral

imagination" that requires an empathic examination not of how people ought to live but how they actually make sense of their experiences. In other words, leaders must examine their decisions with education, rehearsal, and artistry - looking at how things work in a particular situation. Having done so, the leader is more equipped to make an imaginative decision about what to do.

This ethic characterized my central approach to leadership, which is summed up as - the good end justifies the means. I realize that defining what is "good" can be a dizzying undertaking, but I reject the notion that people are unable to discern a good end from a bad one. And contest Bailey's (2001) assertion that politics is never more than a soulless game of strategies and treason. My practical leadership ethic led me to determine that the Arts Center was good because it honestly reflected the city's situation, people's values, and the data. Once I determined there was a good end, I said and did everything that needed to be said and done to reach that end. I do not regret this leadership approach.

Chapter Summary

At the beginning of this chapter, I mused at length about why I became a politician. I am not sure the story of my moral career helped conclude on that point. Perhaps it is enough to say that this is a true story of how I played the practical wisdom of leadership. In the end the reader will have to judge my approach for themselves. As I see it, I was challenged to accomplish something that had never been done before. My dogged determination had to see it through. And even though, on the last day I was not invited to enter the promised land of a magnificent new Arts Center, I could see it from where I stood, and it was good.

CHAPTER FOUR

Habits and Dispositions in a City That Works

> The city, in short, shows the good and evil in human nature in excess.
> Robert E. Park, *The City*, 1925

Introduction

This chapter examines the subject city as a contextual frame for this case study. Taking direction from the grounded research strategy of many qualitative researchers, I pursued a deep situated knowledge of the city (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007, p. 4-5; Jacobs, 2011; Park, 1925; Graham, 2016). In the details that follow the reader will get to know the city of Clearwater (a pseudonym) not just as a physical space but as an expression of its citizens and their truth – called by various scholars, habits and dispositions (Goffman) or values (Flyvbjerg). As I argued in Chapter Two, contextual examination of this city is an important aspect of qualitative research because cities are rich social constructs for understanding human activities. Or, as Robert E. Park wrote "The city is not merely a physical mechanism… It is involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it; it is a product of nature and particularly of human nature" (Park, Burgess & McKenzie, 1925, p.1).

I developed Clearwater's historical context by tracing three core themes over time - the city's disposition towards its urban center, its habit of citizen involvement in decision making, and its value of efficiency in governance vs. direct democracy. Specifically, this chapter examines how the city maintained a longtime affection for its city center, especially for the confluence of two rivers that run through it. Their affection became a pivotal truth in support of the Arts Center project in my study. (The next chapter details the project.) Throughout the city's

history, I also follow a narrative about valuing citizen involvement in not only planning the city's future but guiding its present activities through habits that prefer protocol over chaos. These ideas form the basic themes underlying this chapter.

A Snapshot of Clearwater Today

I begin by describing Clearwater in its current context. Clearwater is a mid-sized city in the Midwest. It is a gateway to the northern third of a state, about 150 miles from the state capital to the east and about 70 miles from a large metropolitan area of over 2 million people in a neighboring state to the west. The population of the city proper is 68,000 but an adjacent smaller city and surrounding townships raise the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) to almost 166,000. The city is the largest urban center in the NW third of the state. Clearwater is 93% white; the next three largest racial groups are Black or African American 1%, Asian 3%, and two or more races 2% (American Community Survey, 2017, [Clearwater] MSA, www.census.gov). Clearwater's largest industries include health care, retail trade, manufacturing, and education. Health care dominates employment with over 12,000 employees. But manufacturing and technology are not far behind, employing another 10,000 people. Information technology is growing in the city's employment statistics (www.clearwaterdevelopment.com - a pseudonym).

The arts have a large presence in Clearwater. A local campus of the state university system enrolls about 10,000 students. Its strengths are in the sciences – particularly chemistry, pre-med, and material science; and in the arts, especially vocal performance. It is known as the "Singing University", but its marching band brings home national awards more often than not. Clearwater also boasts two local theater companies, each with their own building. Prior to the Arts Center it also supported regional performance and the visual arts in a historic theatre

building. One weekend every summer the downtown streets are transformed into an open-air jazz festival lasting late into a steamy July night. Clearwater hosts other summer music festivals featuring varied genres – country, rock, indie, and bluegrass. Its municipal band plays weekly summer concerts in the historic band shell it has occupied since 1902. Private contributions also support symphony and chamber orchestras, as well as a vocal ensemble. Two local writers have won literary awards and a native son served as the state's poet laureate. And finally, every week May to October, a grassy downtown park amphitheater fills with 5,000 people who gather to enjoy free concerts by local musicians.

Clearwater's Evolving System of Local Governance – Efficiency vs. Democracy

Clearwater was incorporated as a city in 1872. Prior to that time, a shared border connected three adjacent villages along the confluence of two central rivers that were platted by prominent business entrepreneurs over a two-decade period. Many of these business owners arrived to "make their fortune buying and selling real estate" (Blakely, 2017, p.43-47). The first mayor of a consolidated Clearwater was elected in March 1872. A lumber owner from New York, his platform rested on the words "communities that are governed best, are governed least". He thought that individual effort should surpass government intervention or assistance and believed everyone would cooperate to that end (Blakely, 2017, p.119-129). The mayor governed with a City Council of twelve men from diverse political and professional backgrounds. Unfortunately, partisan bickering among the City Council whose districts were divided into six wards, proved the mayor's wish for cooperation unattainable.

Citizens of Clearwater took local politics seriously. Political competition was even seen as a form of entertainment as "behind the scenes maneuvering produced enjoyment and political

benefit" (Blakely, 2017, p.215-231). In the next decades, municipal politics was turbulent and unpredictable, as wards (now 10) lauded unique economic and social characteristics. City Council elections were serious matters because of Clearwater's weak mayor system. And strong ward politics made cooperation difficult, leaving the mayor to take the blame for just "doing what the Council wanted." Over time city charters weakened the mayor's power even more, for example, an 1885 charter denied the mayor the power to break a tie. Until 1896 political leadership "remained subject to the control of a Yankee elite [with] 18 of its 20 mayors coming from the same lumbering background. Members of the City Council too hailed from business interests but rarely from the working class (Blakely, p. 237).

Ward structure made unified decision making difficult and representation was chaotic and often full of angry exchanges, but it was supported by citizens as best for Democracy and continued for some time. But it did not last forever. The city's local governance structure changed with the 1906 mayoral election, when the Progressive Era in state politics ushered in an attitude toward government as a social and economic problem solver (Blakely, 2019, p. 270 - 273). Progressive Era (1895-1925) reforms were spearheaded as a national idea that believed government's business was in service to the people - perhaps ironically guided by the opposing goals of more democracy and more efficiency. Transparent government increased efficiency by relying on professionals rather than politicians in a more "interventionist approach to governance" (Blakely, 2019, p.11). Critics of putting too much faith in efficiency, like John Dewey, warned that efficiency stifled democracy by suppressing discussion and debate between individuals and their society (Holt, 1994, p. 74-78). These ideas impacted local governance in Clearwater. Business owners were horrified at the prospect of a Progressive mayor, who would surely gut business of its power and industrial prestige. Despite this, citizens elected a

progressive mayor, whose platform included wrenching an electric power dam away from private interests. Then, around 1909, the growing demands of governing a sophisticated city with a mayor and a part-time City Council spurred a new state law that enabled municipalities to change from ward representation to a commission headed by a mayor, thinking this would stabilize local governance – and make it more efficient (Blakely, 2019 p. 15). A referendum in 1910 changed Clearwater's local governance to a commission system, which remained in place for almost forty years.

By 1947 both labor and business became disenchanted with the commission. People blamed it for inaction and special interests that were supportive of neither the working class nor business. But the primary complaint was the commission's "failure to involve the citizenry in meaningful planning" especially after the Mayor personally appointed a committee to study local planning initiatives (Blakely, 2019, p.357-363). Business leaders thought it was time to hire a city manager, who would bring more professionalism to local governance. A referendum was presented to the electorate by a newly formed Citizen's Committee on City Government. The referendum passed, changing local government to a Council/Manager system. Though labor opposed the dissolution of ward representation, the transition to a seven-person Council went smoothly. And ultimately labor supported four of the seven new City Council candidates. All was not rosy, however. In 1951 an attempt to overturn the council/manager system was brought to another referendum. At that time only eight cities in the state used a Council/Manager system, opting for the "assumed better democracy of the mayor-council system over the alleged efficiency of a City Manager" (p. 374). The mayor referendum failed however, and the city practices a Council/Manager form of government still today, despite subsequent citizen-led challenges in 1956, 1977, 1986, 1990, 1992, and 2005.

How Clearwater Governance Works Today

Today the city elects an eleven-member City Council in recurring spring elections. Five are elected at large – they serve the entire city. Five are elected by district – they serve the people in a particular geography. The district seats are apportioned to maintain an equal ratio of citizens to elected representative between the five districts. The City Clerk amends district boundaries based on annexations and census movement. A rare feature in municipal governments, the City Council President is elected in an at-large popular election. In other cities the Council President is elected by the Council alone. Council Members serve three-year terms, with the district, at-large, and Council President elected in rotating annual spring elections. The city council is the legislative body whose primary function is to represent constituents in maintaining the public's safety and welfare – in short, to advance the public good. Its authority is derived from the basic tenants of a Representative Democracy, dictating that the electorate is solely charged to elect their representative/s.

The office of City Council President is structurally weak. For example, the president cannot make appointments without the consent of the Council, cannot veto actions of the Council, and does not prepare or present an annual budget. By ordinance one of the President's responsibilities is running Council meetings using Roberts Rules of Order but has some discretion in interpreting those rules. The President rules on points of order, for example. As the Chief Elected Officer, the Council President has many duties that require interacting with the public. These include ribbon cuttings, meetings with state officials, and membership on various boards like the downtown development corporation. The President also represents the city in welcoming visitors and dignitaries and speaking for the city at state functions. The President can

build tremendous unofficial power, or what Bourdieu would call political capital, if they are a proficient rhetorician.

Working Together: Government and Citizens

Citizen involvement is a strong habit in Clearwater, which city staff has come to accept or embrace, as reflected in the thoughts of two senior staff I interviewed:

> Again, one of the big things about Clearwater was we spent a lot of time getting information out … It's very important to have people be part of a public input process. We went to all the boards and commissions … because they knew what was going on. [My former boss] called this "informed decision making" and insisted on getting all the information we could to the public.

And another:

> I think we learned lessons as social media increased along with the cry for public participation. We had to readjust when we met and when we made decisions and how long it took, all the public input, making sure many groups felt included. Decision making is not something you can just do anymore. In the old days, if you had a council president or mayor or banker who was the top person in the community, you'd just do it; but those days are long gone.

Despite the nuanced attitudes seen in these narratives, citizens in Clearwater are accustomed to being involved in deciding the city's direction. One of the most significant signs of this habit in recent times was a community wide effort creating a vision for Clearwater's future. In this year-long exercise over 100 citizens from across the city came together every month to write a plan for what they wanted Clearwater to look like in the next twenty years. Their report, titled "A Clear Future" (a pseudonym), laid out five ambitious action areas. I interviewed one of the citizen leaders who guided the process.

> Interviewer: What do you think makes Clearwater work?
>
> Participant: For me, when we did [Clear Future] we brought forth democracy and doing things in a democratic way. I don't know if that's really the right

> words … but we brought forth principles of running meetings … with ground rules and were respectful when others talked about topics … we shared ideas; there were no bad ideas. I mean there's just this nice thing we said, we're here to work together. And what came out of that was truly civic engagement. The board thought we did good by helping citizens have a voice in what they think is important.
>
> … We don't need to rely on the city to make a difference. Yes, we had to work with the city to do all the things, but it wasn't an initiative the city started. It was an initiative the citizens started. When you have those little wins, it helps with the big stuff.

Citizen involvement is obvious in other ways too. In any given year, 150 citizens serve on one of many city boards and commissions across a variety of responsibilities like: Landmarks, Waterways and Parks, Plan Commission, Sustainability Commission, and Redevelopment Authority. They are thanked for their service every January with a hearty breakfast. Also, half a dozen neighborhood associations scattered around the city bother city hall when they want something changed in their neighborhood, like adding a stop sign or shutting down a pigeon coop. In short, Clearwater does not do much without involving its citizens.

Working Together: City Council - City Staff - Citizens

The City Council works closely with the executive side of local governance. The executive "branch" is charged with the efficient running of the city. Nine departments divide this general duty among five hundred employees who are led by a Chief Executive Officer, the City Manager, who is hired by the City Council. The City Manager's other duties include working with the Council President to create the Council agenda and building good relationships within and outside the city. The Manager also helps Council Members bring forward ideas, but Members can also do so without the City Manager.

The primary tension between city staff and the City Council is between power and expertise. Staff recognizes that in a Democracy, the city council has power. It derives this power from the electorate; it is real power. On the other hand, city council recognizes that though it has power it often lacks expertise. So, the council needs the expertise of staff to execute its ideas. The strength of the Council/Manager form relies on working out this tension. And works best, put simply, when staff concerns itself with the "how" and city council concerns itself with the "what." During my 14 years on the City Council, Clearwater managed this tension with respect and collegiality.

The fact that Clearwater practices a Council/Manager form of government is significant. The fact that it has done so since 1947 is more significant. The fact that it elects its Council President in a general election is even more significant. It means that, between the competing interests of efficiency and Democracy, Clearwater fashioned a compromise – a way of governing that balances the two. For example, it rejected a mayor but elects its Council President by popular vote. It imparted great symbolic responsibility to the Council President but made the office structurally weak. It charged the City Manager with setting council agendas but left a mechanism for council to alter them. It accepted the leadership of elected officials but turned to citizen led referenda in times of big controversy – a significant part of a later chapter.

Working Together: Sharing Space

Clearwater boasts a long habit of working together in shared spaces. In a first of its kind in the state, and still only, the City/County Public Health Department shares a roof in the County Government Center. Its annual budget is balanced between city and county funding partners. In the same government center, a shared city police and county sheriff's department occupy the

same physical space but separate operations. And in recreational areas, the city shares football, soccer, softball, baseball, and hockey fields between the university, the school district, and "town" sports. At times, this arrangement is a scheduling nightmare, but has facilitated valuable capital upgrades to many sporting venues in the city. Clearwater knows how to share.

A History of Clearwater's Urban Core as a Special Place

This section explores the importance of Clearwater's city center through a short history of its urban core development. Beginning at the city's founding, the story quickly moves forward to the mid 1990's when major re-development occurred in the city center, focusing on a project that became a precursor to the Arts Center I studied, and exemplifying the city's habit of working together that I seek to reveal.

Before I begin, I capture the affection for its city center in this reflection of a native son:

> I have this view that downtown is the part of the community that the entire community owns… Growing up on the west side, I never felt at home on the south or north or east sides. But downtown I felt like this is the part … [where] everyone should [feel] like this might be my town.
>
> (Resident, business owner, December 13, 2019)

NOTE: I use the terms "city center", "urban core" and "downtown" interchangeably, as they are used as such in analytic literature and by the participants in my study.

Early City Center – A Working River

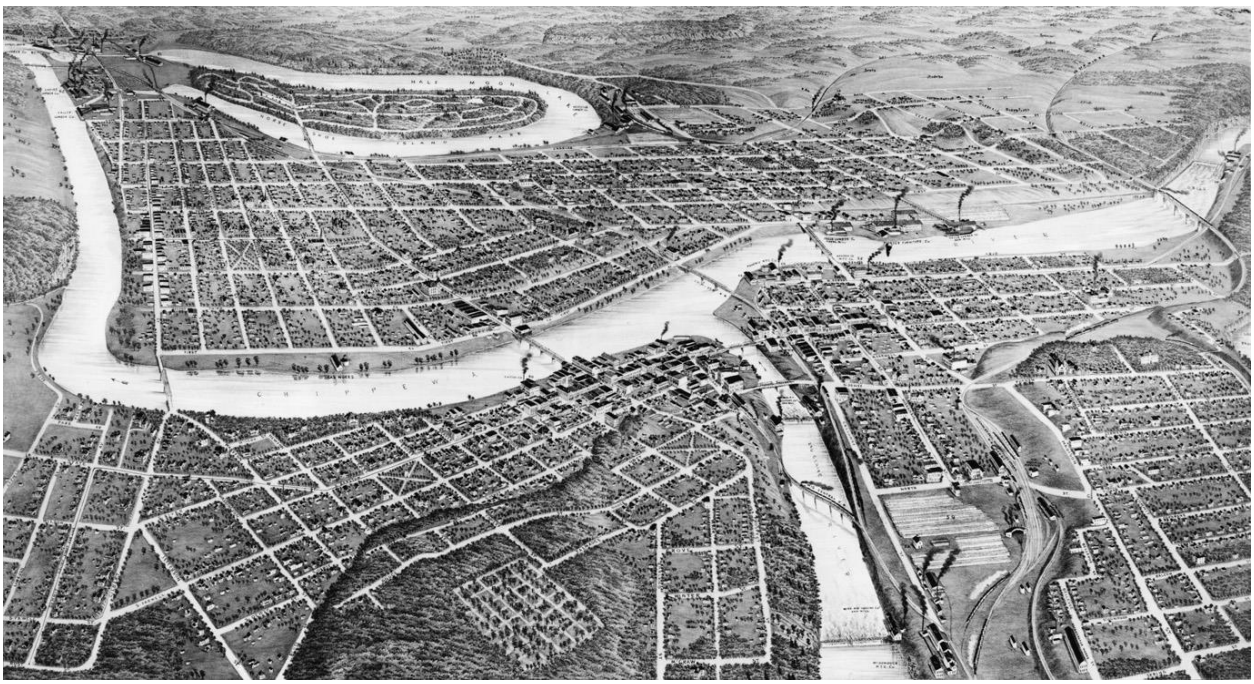
The dominant physical feature in Clearwater is the confluence of two rivers that flow together in the city center. (See Figure 1) This confluence - defined as a coming or flowing together - played heavily in the city's settlement and development. Early in its history, the rivers were treated as working rivers. During the 1700's two Native American tribes engaged in near

constant combat along the two rivers as they vied for access to abundant natural resources like rice, wild game, and fur. Sadly, the rivers' confluence took on the name the "Road of War" (Barland, 1960, p.1-4) because of the endless bloody battles fought there. A treaty of 1825 (Hieb, 1988, p.14-21) calling for an agreement to "lay down the hatchet… and become brothers" aimed to end the bloodshed by establishing the first legal boundary between the two tribes. The confluence of the two rivers was the dividing line.

Figure 1

The Confluence of Downtown Rivers, looking west, 1891

Courtesy of Clearwater Museum (a pseudonym)



Prior to this time, European explorers had already discovered the advantages that rivers offered a burgeoning fur trading business. As early as 1767 explorers for the British government

paddled the river and when coming upon the confluence exclaimed of the smaller one “the waters run clear!” (Hieb, p.20). The city’s name Clearwater memorializes this legend. Over time, fur traders from Europe as well as local Native American tribes met a growing demand for hides in large part by using the river as a navigable trading route and a means of communication (Blakely, 2017, p.8). Less than twenty years later, simple cabins and fur trading posts dotted the banks of the confluence. By the mid 1800’s more permanent homes and young families laid claim to land along the rivers. Some of them made a fortune in the logging industry that rose to prominence in the following decades, dominating local industry for the next fifty years until the pine forests were stripped of their natural abundance.

The rivers of Clearwater run through the center of what was once a thick pine forest. Strong for its weight and easy to transport, pine was in demand as the choice building material for a growing country (Hieb, 1988, p.40-51). Men “with pine on their minds” flocked to Clearwater to become lumberjacks in the dangerous enterprise of logging, quickly making it the home of the world’s largest number of sawmills. As logging interests grew, the rivers were put to further use with dams that created large backwaters to hold and guide thousands of logs waiting to float down river. But not all lumbering was confined to working as a lumberjack. Some logging men became mill owners and eventually owned other businesses (Barland, 1960, p.37-46; Hieb, 1988, p.60). As their wealth increased, they bought and developed land along the riverbanks. Some of the stateliest homes in the city still bear their family names. Yet Clearwater never became dominated by a singular “lumber baron … [in part because] the [timber] business was shared by several small companies…” (Blakeley, 2017, p. 37).

By the early 1900’s lumbering dipped to its low ebb. The advent of steamboat transportation competed with logging interests on the river and the railroad lured milled lumber

for distribution along its tracks (Barland, p.93-94, 118; Hieb, p. 82-83). But the river continued working for the city in other ways - notably as the generator of electric power. A private electric company installed a water wheel near the confluence of the rivers that powered a generator supplying the first street lighting in downtown. Soon afterwards, waterpower was replaced by a coal gasification plant that processed coal to produce liquid fuel for home and municipal lighting. But the byproducts of the process, which were buried at the site, contaminated the soil necessitating an environmental clean-up many decades later.

Developing the City Center – A Useful River

During the early 1900's Clearwater concentrated on modernizing its city center to meet the needs of a growing population (Blakely, 2017, pp. 19, 103-117). The river proved useful in that undertaking. Waterpower from several privately owned dams were eventually consolidated into one large power company that supplied electric power to residences and business in the urban core. Later the city built a bridge at the confluence to accommodate travel east to west through downtown. The only bridge to cross the river for miles in either direction, it funneled many travelers through the city center. When more bridges were needed, downtown merchants lobbied and won placement close to their retail establishments (Blakely, 2019, p.207).

Like other common social norms across the county, Clearwater also used the river to meet private needs. Some homes drank water pumped directly from the river, and all homes and businesses in the city center emptied sewage into it. An 1881 description of the practice reads "the filth that life in a city involved would eventually make a water system necessary. But the … [rivers were, for now] a valuable sewage receptacle" (Blakely, 2017, p.130). Eventually the issue

of potable water became a significant problem, prompting municipal water works and sewage treatment plants to be built and modernized over time (Blakely, 2019, pp. 149, 183).

Clearwater's city center also became a magnet for entertainment and retail. Music played a significant role in the city's cultural norms. A music hall, built downtown in 1871, seated 1,500 people. (Hieb, 1988, p.58). When the music hall burned to the ground, an Opera House was built that welcomed opera "stars" traveling between larger cities (Barland, 1960, p.104). Retail was also concentrated in the city center. Department stores, drug stores, furniture and general stores inspired proud owners to declare downtown "The Shopping Center of [Clearwater]" a distinction it carried well into the 20th century (Blakely, 2019, pp. 112-118, 40). But the pride and joy of the time was a new Municipal Auditorium. Local political leaders dubbed it "The Confluence Project" because of its location just north of the confluence of the two rivers. Built in 1916, it remained a focal point for city events until 1961.

A Modern City Center – A Neglected River

In the early 1900's Clearwater began a development push; in the meantime, attention to its rivers fell away. The importance of development during this time is reflected in local history.

> The creation of a city doesn't just happen. For more than 130 years courageous and farsighted men and women nurtured, shaped, toiled and sometimes despaired as they built this community. It was this intense dedication… [that made Clearwater] the fastest growing city in the state." (Hieb, 1988, p. 81)

As growth accelerated downtown, retail and commercial owners paid more attention to managing congested traffic outside their storefronts than to the rolling river that flowed just behind. Tall trees and underbrush quickly blocked the view of the river, now only enjoyed by a few avid canoeists and fly fishers. A sad "river park" stretched the south bend of the river's confluence, but it suffered from neglect. Surprisingly perhaps, a public beach on the river

remained a popular attraction despite ongoing sewage contamination (Blakely, 2019, pp.238-240). But a city referendum defeated a proposal to build a municipal pool with the argument that a sewage treatment plant was all that was needed to clean up the beach on the river.

Manufacturing and retail interests intensified in the city center over the next few decades. National retail corporations like Sears and Roebuck bought up small local retail businesses, changing the character of downtown shopping by introducing more variety and volume. By 1935 national retailers like JC Penney, Woolworths, and Walgreens dominated the city center at a place the locals called the four corners – about a block away from river's edge but a world away from affection for it. Manufacturing interests grew too. A tire manufacturer, a paper mill, a hospital, and a power plant expanded their physical plants close to the confluence of the two rivers (Blakely, 2019, p. 286-293). Some were eventually bought up by national corporations, but all survived the Depression Era and the many changes the post-WWII era brought to manufacturing. Most of them employ people in the city center yet today.

A Planned City Center – A Precious River

In the mid 1900's habits of urban development started changing with the onset of public planning. But it took time and, for a while, competing dispositions caused local tension. WPA (Works Progress Administration) projects brought capital investment to the city (Blakely, 2019, p.328-333) which were welcomed by citizens and political leaders. The expansion of the municipal sewage system and a park in the city center were among the projects funded by the WPA. The mayor also wanted to improve downtown by bonding for more parking and another bridge across the river, but the Chamber of Commerce thought that private business should lead those efforts. The mayor lost the election based in part on this platform. Later in the same

century, on the national scene, central business districts (CBD) were losing their dominance as suburban malls sprung up outside the city center, exacerbating middle class flight (Graham, 2016, pp. 98-106). As a consequence, downtown developers devised ways to bring commerce back to the CBD. The term "blight" came to mean a menace to business as words like "civic cancer" were used to describe inner city residential living. Ultimately large amounts of public money were spent on big metropolitan Urban Renewal projects that cleared blight, built high-rise apartment complexes dotted with wooded oases, and constructed multi-lane expressways to entice commerce and residents back downtown. In so doing many poor people were forced out of inner-city housing.

But in Clearwater large urban renewal projects did not dominate CBD development. Instead, as the development debate moved into the post WWII years, city planners came to be seen as the rightful regulators of the city's growth. This meant development for the most part occurred in incremental changes to existing public infrastructure with the goal of attracting private sector investment. Clearwater's city planners also had safety concerns about the residential construction industry. For example, a high demand for housing caused a flurry of "uncoordinated private home construction" that left basements without safe egress and other fire hazards that resulted from "rudimentary" electrical skills … by self-taught home builders" (Blakely, 2019, p.331). On the other hand, the quality of city planning was challenged too. Private developers noted that government planning was a failed effort because it was so "fluid … [and] without a chartered course that produced results". For a time, planned development primarily remained in the hands of private developers whose names are still ensconced on Clearwater's streets and statues. Then, in the 1980's a public participation model of development based on cooperative work between citizens and city planners gained traction.

Land Use Plans Elevate the City Center

Public participation became a major strategy used to foster Clearwater's land use planning. As the preface to an early Comprehensive Plan reads, it "took two years and involved hundreds of people" to develop this plan (1983). The importance of a Comprehensive Plan cannot be overstated from the planner's point of view because it establishes a vision of the future and a direction for getting there. And when the Plan was developed with public input, it was seen as a legitimate guide for official actions like site plan approval and zoning. Two of Clearwater's city planners who participated in my study exemplify this important norm.

> When I [got here as the city planner] they didn't have a comprehensive plan. They had a zoning code, written in 1952. There was a huge need to create … a more formal city planning process. It must state - here are our policies; this is what we hope to accomplish. You have ordinances in place that implement the plans, and then you have procedures and processes that put it all into place. Well, it took 33 years and thousands of hours of public input … to get that all in place, but it happened.
>
> (former Clearwater City Planner)

> I spent a lot of my time in the community… a lot of time at meetings. Certainly, there were all the regular board meetings, plan commission and all that. But there was also always some group meeting to do something and usually I was at there … trying to explain, No, we're trying to do good work. We really do want to listen.
>
> (former Clearwater City Planner)

The First Formal Plan 1953: Rivers to Cross and a Civic Auditorium. The first plan created with a consultant under a new public participation model paid special attention to the Central Business District (CBD). The report's author believed the CBD would likely see three times growth in business and that "this district must thrive against all competition elsewhere, otherwise taxable values would be destroyed and the City's tax base undermined" (Shattuck, 1953). The best tactics for a thriving CBD were accessible transportation, convenient parking and attracting a "buying public." Merchandizing to tourists was also emphasized because of Clearwater's gateway to a vacation land to the north.

While little mention was made of the city's rivers, other downtown assets were recommended for improvement. A bridge was encouraged to better direct downtown traffic flow and the need to address the "problem of water pollution" in the rivers was highlighted. But the report placed no emphasis on the rivers as natural assets. Mention was made, however, of the need for a "civic auditorium" in the central business district. (See Figure 2) The large size of such an auditorium was a barrier to a downtown location, the report said, but the "blocks overlooking the river… still provide the best opportunity". The report recommended forming a study committee to determine the building's uses, which should include a large theatre, convention hall, sports arena, and ice-making floor. In this early modern era in Clearwater's planning history, an emphasis on developing downtown as a special place is taking shape.

Figure 2

CBD, Confluence of Downtown Rivers, looking south, 1930's
Courtesy of Hugh Passow

A New Plan Focused on the Future 1968: Concern for the Rivers. By 1958 Clearwater had established a Plan Commission under enabling legislation recently passed by the state legislature. The main task of Plan Commissions was developing a comprehensive land use plan and overseeing compliance to the Plan in ongoing meetings. Clearwater's Plan Commission was composed primarily of citizens, with oversight by the city manager. In 1968 the Commission ordered an update to several existing land use plans using an outside consultant. The new Comprehensive Community Plan made several observations and recommendations that are referenced in the following discussion (Barton-Aschman, 1968). One of the firm's first observations lauded the cooperative habits of city planning, especially its work with other municipalities in a "free exchange of information". The report encouraged the city to continue this coordinated effort as "essential to the city's continued existence as a good place to live and work."

Many people and organizations participated in the update and were acknowledged in the report's preface – yet another affirmation of the city's emphasis on citizen participation. As the report said, "A successful [plan] depends in large measure upon active participation by local citizens… which generates pride and enthusiasm to get the job done … [and should be facilitated] by personal contact [between] city officials and… individuals who contribute to community development or are directly affected by it …".

Clearwater's central city was emphasized as the "dominant place for business and cultural activity" and "the focal point of [the city's] vitality… impacting the whole western part of the state. The Plan placed great importance on the central business district's (CBD) economic assets, especially in job creation and cultural enjoyment. (See Figure 3) It called on local government to make a moral commitment to become the responsible entity for development,

saying “The adoption of the CBD Plan is in principle a moral commitment to achieve the level of municipal involvement called for”.

Figure 3

Confluence of Downtown Rivers, CBD, looking south, 1968
Courtesy of [Clearwater] City Manager’s Office (a pseudonym)

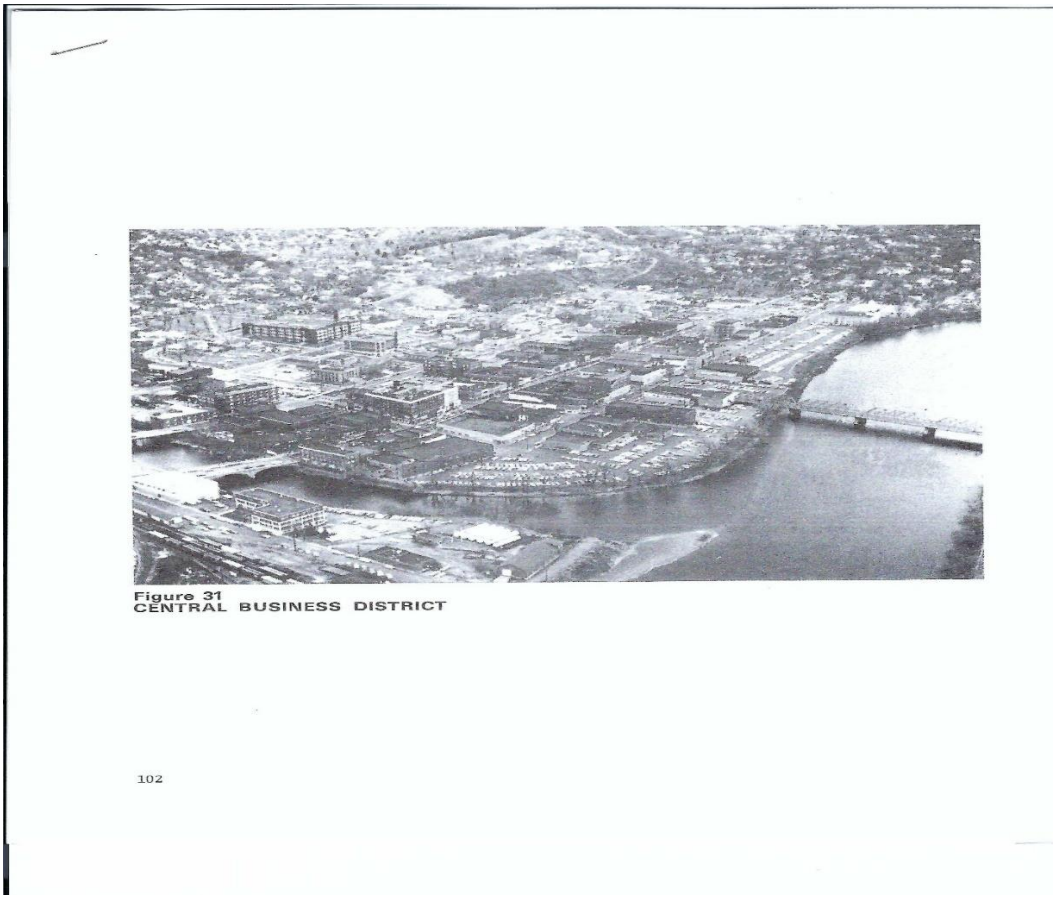


Figure 31
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

102

As in earlier plans, downtown rivers were called out, but this time as a “focus for major open space”. Concern was voiced over the quality of the rivers, however. The rivers provide “scenic resources … that have been a determining factor in the development of land for urban

use, [though] improvement and beautification of the riverfront in the CBD is recommended". In even stronger language, the report said "the [city] should protect the environment of its [rivers]… by designating [parts of them] conservation areas." Here is evidence of a growing concern about the diminished quality of downtown rivers as natural assets. The report went on to recommend a river beautification program with the installation of pedestrian trails along the riverfront. "Beauty in the CBD is essential to its most basic functions … it is critical that beautification be carried out…".

This Plan adds more strength to the arguments that Clearwater's urban core was a special place, and that public participation was necessary to planning. But progress in implementation languished. It was almost twenty years before the city finally recognized that its downtown must be reawakened as a place of special importance once and for all.

Comprehensive Plan 1982: A Dying Central Business District and Dirty Rivers.

Clearwater's 1982 *Central Business District Plan* portrayed a future of the city's urban core moving away from retail. This, despite an earlier plan, *CBD Redevelopment Plan* (1976), that recommended building up downtown retail by anchoring large department stores there connected by an elaborate system of above-grade pedestrian walkways. But retail did not turn out to be downtown's strength. Instead, the 1982 Plan envisioned downtown as an appropriate location for one-of-a-kind regional facilities. For the first time I could find in a written document, the CBD Plan called out the city's "community waterways" (its rivers) as tremendous resources of "natural beauty, history and recreation" while chastising the city for allowing them to decay. Physical development has "turned its back" on the city's waterways; it urged the city to quickly improve the condition of its waterways. "Times change" the report said and "the difficulty of reinvestment in downtown is apparent" in large part because the rivers constrain expansion and

increase construction costs accounting for recurring flooding. Further, the downtown suffers a "poor image" the report lamented. Ironically, while it identified downtown's "strong setting at the confluence of [two rivers]" it recommended maintaining the riverfront largely as a "parking reservoir for a remaining retail core and regional attractions".

The lack of appreciation for its rivers spurred the formation of a committee called the [Clearwater] River Committee. The committee's charge was to examine the condition of the city's waterways and develop a fifty-year plan to promote and enhance the rivers (*Report on the Waterways of [Clearwater*], 1985). The report blamed the blighted conditions along the waterways on the lack of awareness of "waterway resources". As a remedy it recommended the formation of a Waterways Commission, which would have formal authority to oversee development and maintenance of the city's waterways. It also identified the need for cleaning up vegetation and debris along the riverbanks, calling on the city to take a lead in this endeavor. As an aside, the city did form a Waterways and Parks Commission, which is still an integral part of preserving, promoting, and protecting the city's waterways as a natural asset.

Evolving Land-use Plans: Bringing Downtown and its Rivers Back to Life. Over the next decade Clearwater's evolving land use plans sharpened the city's values towards its urban core and the confluence of two rivers as assets to the community *([Clearwater] Comprehensive Plan*, 1993). "Clearwater is a river city… whose people [are trying] to unite the banks of [its rivers] as a unique recreational source. And the "greater downtown… serves as a symbol of the community… representing the social and civic aspects of community life". For the first time the Plan included strategic actions that should be taken in a short time frame, especially in downtown as a "subject of special concern". One new idea was to build a convention center at the confluence. While specific details were not introduced, the Plan strongly asserted that "a

convention center would introduce a tremendous catalyst into the area… [and become] an economic engine that would transform the district".

At the same time, a citizen report added weight to previous city center plans and elevated Clearwater's cultural vision (*A Goodlife Plan* – a pseudonym). The committee met for more than eight months, taking input and parsing ideas. Its completed report opens with the sentence the "City Center is the … cross section that incorporates the entire spectrum of community life from old to new" and is a "key focus of the community's vision". The report advised that the City Center become the location of one-of-a-kind facilities such as convention centers and performing arts centers, and that Clearwater "should use the two rivers which join in the city center to their fullest potential".

In 2005 city planners led an update to the 1993 land-use plan. A Citizens Advisory Committee was integral to the process as they conducted interviews, published a newsletter, and distributed surveys. A community forum also allowed citizens to discuss findings. The 2005 plan focused on redeveloping downtown by attracting entertainment, housing, and medical services. It was also concerned with providing more public access to the river front. The idea of a convention center at the river's confluence remained on people's minds, even though a 1995 referendum to fund it had failed. The new Plan recommended a feasibility study for an event center located somewhere in the greater Clearwater area.

Another new development in the 2005 Plan was strengthening a "Lead Agency" that would support downtown. Other city supported downtown advocacy groups had been trying to revitalize downtown over the years with business loans and grants, but more was needed. The stronger Lead Agency was formed over time and commissioned a report on downtown

improvements. The report, titled [*Clearwater] Downtown Action Agenda* was instrumental in building support for the project I studied. Some highlights from its vision statement read, "downtown is very alive, flourishing and bustling with activity; we have a downtown of beautiful rivers and buildings that reflect our history and our future; downtown is a strong arts and cultural center that draws people and is an arts hub between [two larger cities]". The *Action Agenda* also refocused the city's attention on its rivers as assets: "the [two rivers] –and their confluence – are downtown's first and foremost assets. "The more downtown is connected to its rivers, the more unique and compelling downtown will become".

Another update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2015 emphasized again the importance of the city's urban core. Consistent with past public participation, a committee of forty citizens was appointed to lead the update, meeting monthly from September 2014 to June 2015. But this time citizens called out a specific direction for downtown. "The community's citizens feel it is very important that the downtown be enhanced in a specific way… increasing the number of retail businesses, restaurants, and destinations, [as well as] improvements in [the]appearance of downtown, incorporating the rivers into downtown's operations and image…". The Plan called on the city to "continue to participate … in the effort to [support the Arts Center Project]" which was progressing through its approval process. It was hoped and expected that The Arts Center … "would be the catalyst for many other private investments [in downtown]". The Plan admonished the city for using the riverfronts as parking lots and allowing downtown commercial buildings to "present their worst sides to the river". Instead, pedestrian bridges crossing the river and riverfront greenways connected by a trail system were believed to be as important as private development.

A Project that Exemplifies the Value of Clearwater's Urban Core

Thus far I have presented Clearwater's downtown development habits and dispositions from a policy perspective, but specific examples can better portray the city's values in practice. To that end, this section presents a concrete example of the value the city placed on its downtown in a story of a project that is the direct precursor to the one at the center of my study.

An Environmental Clean-up, a Public Park, and a Big Commercial Development

The 1990's were a dramatic time for Clearwater's urban core. Downtown was already empty of retail, leaving many empty store fronts and blighted properties behind; then a manufacturing plant closed; a natural disaster hit, and an environmental clean-up forced the city to address the poor condition of land along the river's confluence.

In June 1992, a major tire manufacturer closed its doors. Over 1,300 workers lost their jobs. Open since 1917, the tire manufacturer had employed more than 4,000 people over time. But a changing rubber demand and the relatively small operation in downtown forced the plant's closure. City leaders worked with the Federal Government to help workers find new jobs, relocate, or educate themselves with new skills. The Director of Community Development at the time recalls this experience:

> I co-chaired the plant closing task force, which was really a way for people to vent and talk about ideas … of what to do with that giant plant closing. There were grants and state agency funding… that helped people transition to new employment … At the same time an explosion of retail service jobs opened up at the new mall …There was an expansion of jobs… but they didn't pay benefits or the same wages.
>
> (Interview with former community development director)

Fortunately, by August 1992 the former tire plant was purchased by a family development company who transformed it into the bustling, small-business complex it is today.

The next year, 1993, the third highest flood on record hit downtown. Seventy-five structures flooded with water in their basements; damages to the city reached $750,000.00. The area was declared a federal disaster zone. A $4 million grant from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) allowed the city to buy fifty uninhabitable properties and help residents move to safe and sanitary housing. An interview with the city's finance director at the time revealed the impact of this event on her public service.

> In a little house we would find families with six kids living on the upper floor… We had to find them an apartment with enough bedrooms for the age and sex of the children… In one house we found a dead body in the basement… There were engineering issues too… The dikes the Corps of Engineers built a long time ago [were not working]… so we bought houses, demolished them and put the area into permeable surfaces so the land could flood without a lot of damage… To be part of that was teamwork. I mean you had inspections; you had engineering; you had parks and engineering, and the whole city working on it… It just seemed to me that besides doing a job, you were working for the public good and that always seemed to me to be very rewarding.
>
> (Interview with former finance director)

The remediated but flood prone land in the city's urban core sat vacant and flat, but the city did not sit idle. In 1994 the DNR (Department of Natural Resources) notified the city that it must clean up the environmental contamination on the north bank of the river. The city purchased the area in 1981 after it was designated a brownfield resulting from 100 years of industrial operations contaminating the soil with arsenic, lead, cadmium, zinc, coal tar, cyanide, and other heavy metals. (See Figure 4)

A big soil berm constructed years before, blocked the river view on the west side and old cement foundations lined the inland border on the east. A low grassy field lay in the middle. An energy utility headquarters was still operating on the site. Then in 2002, using a DNR remediation and Redevelopment Program, the city, the DNR, and the Energy utility worked as a team to excavate and treat 12,000 tons of contaminated soil, which cost over $2 million. But city leadership was not content to just live with a grassy field in its urban core. According to the

former risk manager I interviewed, who worked on the project, the city asked instead "What should downtown look like … how do we create a space [where] we don't know what the future is going be, but provide as much opportunity as we can"? A few years later the answer came.

Figure 4

Industrial Remediation Site: north shore confluence, looking east, 1961
Courtesy of H. Passow

The city embarked on an effort to not only remediate the site, but re-develop it. This began with raising the flood plain. By standard, flood plains are raised by adding soil and building up the river edge with rocks. Working with the DNR, the city engineer made the vacant land more interesting by curving the soil berms and opening up access to the river. This novel idea required cooperation and a willingness to stretch current practices. Again, the risk manager said, "it could not have happened without a cooperative spirit… [and] a team of people in place

at the right time and the right place … to create literally what became the foundation from which all of [this area] was later built". Their work spurred discussions of building a public park along the downtown rivers. The city was finally turning around to face the river and capitalize on this natural asset. The public park design and approval process took five years and eight design iterations to complete, punctuated by countless public input sessions, public hearings, and information sharing – more proof of a long-standing habit of public participation in action.

Figure 5

Newly Completed Public Park: north shore of the river's confluence, looking north, 2008

Courtesy of the photographer, P.I.

In closing, reclaiming this site was aided by private business too, one leader especially. In 2003 the owner of a local credit union decided to move the corporate headquarters downtown. The decision was influenced in part by the city's plea to move businesses downtown and partly by financial incentives. The owner understood that public input was important to getting the new headquarters approved. She spoke at fifty public gatherings telling the story about why the headquarters, and a public park, were good investments (local newspaper, November 27, 2011). Eventually the project prevailed; the corporate headquarters was built, and a public park came to life lovingly beside it. Soon after, other private investment filled the area with urban housing, a technology company, small businesses, and a new post office. In her interview the credit union president recalled "I felt meeting with people was an important part of being a good corporate neighbor".

A Worthy Downtown

At the time of my study in the mid 2000's, the city was still worried about its downtown. Many participants I interviewed recalled a past downtown in deep trouble:

A retired police officer said:

> When I started on the police department (1983) downtown was where you went to buy drugs, or get a prostitute, or sell stolen property or steal property, or just get drunk and fight. I arrested people down there for every imaginable vice and crime. When that happens, a city gets the reputation for that, then folks who could make a difference don't want to go there because it's not safe … The folks who are causing the problems recognize this too and get away with pretty much whatever they want…

A retired city planner said:

> If you were to say, "What is the low end of Clearwater?" it was downtown. The buildings were in ill repair. It was the highest crime district, a lot of drugs. You had the contamination of the battery plant. You had contamination across the street from piles of tires.

A young business owner said:

> For the peers around me, it was very much just a stopping point, not somewhere you'd want to stay or land. We would try to do something creative or successful in business or in art or in whatever… It was a decaying downtown that made for good scary video making. It was a kind of a purgatory. It wasn't terrible but you were just waiting for something to happen.

A former business owner downtown said:

> … in 1980 I counted twenty-six empty store fronts in the four blocks containing my restaurant. The physical decay of the buildings was apparent as the new mall emptied downtown of retail.

But they still thought downtown was important.

A downtown entrepreneur said:

> Downtowns are extremely important. That's where the vast majority of identity and creativity comes from, spark, culture, economy, tax base, everything, all the most valuable, well, not all, but a lot of most the valuable buildings are down there. All those types of things are key in terms of walkability, those things that make a thriving vital community. The denser the city is the more of those things you have. And downtown there are more workers, more people living, more ability for people to pop up against each other and have ideas, more businesses to have things happen, you know more things happen in a dense environment. There's just a geography that scientifically makes sense, I suppose.

A retired city planner said:

> It's very important to keep a healthy city center in the community. No doubt about it. You learn that in school, and you see it apply to communities that have failed downtowns. It becomes a fester that bleeds out into older neighborhoods and starts ruining the community.

In the previous chunks of data, we see that Robert Park (1925) was correct, cities are composed by the people who live in them. The energy in Clearwater came from the people who lived there, not from a distant planner on the other side of the universe. Values and habits grew from the ground up, coming from the people who knew every inch of a place – its every sidewalk, Jane Jacobs would say.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I developed two themes meant to help the reader understand Clearwater's history, habits, and values. First, I proved that the city center and its rivers were valued places. What was originally merely a practical site to settle a city, evolved into a natural asset that compelled a city's affection and investment. Clearwater's evolving land use plans over a fifty-year period codified that investment.

I also argued that Clearwater's habits of local governance landed somewhere between efficiency and democracy. I gave concrete examples of its efficiency in how city staff worked together with other public and private agencies to clean up a contaminated site, and how citizens' fifty-year preference for efficiency favored a Council/Manager form of government. I countered that with concrete examples of its habit of democracy in involving citizens in most planning and decision making, and in citizen led initiatives that shaped the city's future, and in purposefully weakening the power of its chief elected officer. In later chapters the reader will see how understanding these habits allowed leaders of the Arts Center project to manipulate a complex decision-making process to their advantage. In the end, Clearwater's cooperative habit stood aside for heroines and heroes when they must, but most often they worked together without them.

The next chapter provides a conventional description of the Arts Center project – the who, what, when and how.

CHAPTER FIVE

Description of the Arts Center Project

The [Arts Center] is a confluence of ideas - a confluence of art, dance, music, and song. It is a confluence of hopes, dreams, education, and inspiration.
DREAM. CREATE. INSPIRE
[Arts Center] Vision Statement

Introduction

The story of how Clearwater came to build an Arts Center is already the stuff of legend, on par with the city's founding myth, perhaps. A decade in the making, the drama continues to unfold as I write this dissertation. But for now, a bold Arts Center rises from the confluence of two rivers where once sat a crumbling parking lot and a hollow commercial building. Many locals say it seems the Arts Center has always been there even though it opened only two years prior to this writing. Maybe that is because it is always busy. People come from down the block and across the country to take in a show, listen to a concert, view original art, attend a meeting, go to work or school, or just sit a spell in the glass-walled lobby beside windows that touch the sky. They are welcomed and can be forgiven for just enjoying the moment. But for the people who know too much about what it took to get here, the fact that the Arts Center exists is a triumph.

This chapter will tell that triumphant story from the perspective of historical documentation and lived experience, setting the stage for the analysis that follows. First, I remind the reader that I was a rabid supporter and leader of the Arts Center project, using my power and position as City Council President to help bring it about. I acknowledge that this story

is told from my experience, but I did my best to uncover a particular social reality through the experiences of many people who were involved.

The narrative is organized loosely in chronological order: beginning with the idea for the Center, moving through the scope of the project and its approval processes, and ending with a short description of the building itself and its operations. I titled the project The Arts Center - a pseudonym for its actual name.

The Arts Center Idea is Born

In what is most likely an apocryphal story, the idea for the Arts Center was born in the serendipitous meeting of two people over an adult beverage, at an adult establishment that serves such libations. They happened to be at the same establishment at the same time and knew each other from many professional encounters. One was a partner in a local development firm, the other an administrator for facility development on the university campus in Clearwater. A short time into their conversation the administrator casually said to the developer that the university desperately needed a new theatre because the one on campus was too small and too old. Her lament about the theatre's dirt floor basement was true. The local developer raised her eyebrows and responded that her company had just purchased a prime piece of property at the confluence of two rivers in the city's downtown. After many decades, the family who owned the property was ready to sell. The developer, a participant in this study, recalled the circumstance of the land purchase during our interview: "Ms. R., the sole owner, was visiting downtown Clearwater one day and was appalled by the shape of the property. She directed her family to sell. I felt I could make an offer because I knew the family through another connection". Shortly thereafter the family accepted the offer and the property sold. Back at the adult-beverage encounter, the

developer then said to her companion, her company had just started thinking about what to do with the property. As the university administrator recalled in our interview, “I slammed my frosted mug on the table and proclaimed “Get out of here! We need a new performance space, there is no space to build on campus; let’s work together. We could share with the city and improve our education space for arts students. Are you interested?” As it turned out the developer was interested. That was in 2009.

The Idea Takes Shape

Over the next two years the university and the developer continued to talk through their idea. During this time, the university was also writing its first comprehensive facilities master plan for campus development. It was a two-year effort, finishing in 2010. The Plan affirmed that the campus needed new performance and arts education space and welcomed building joint facilities with outside entities that supported the campus and community arts.

Meanwhile, the development company and a local commercial contractor performed due diligence on the property– soil sampling, flood plain determination, and stabilization borings. Internally, the developers weighed the impact of the project on their firm and the city. Initially they were not certain an arts center was the right project for either, contemplating a commercial development instead. But ultimately, they decided to try this new venture. An owner in the development company said in her interview that this was in large part because we “could see that downtown needed a shot in the arm and this property was perfect [for it]”. It so happens that another partner in the development company became the project’s champion and chief architect.

The Public Sector is Invited

Early in 2010 the development company wrote to the City Manager asking for the city's support to "assess the feasibility and coordinate the possible redevelopment of a property [the firm owned] in downtown". The initial renderings showed a two-phase project. The first phase included a performance center; the second a commercial development with surface parking across the street. The letter argued that a project of this kind presented "significant barriers" to private development and would not likely occur "without some public participation" and spelled out what that participation might look like. This included the creation of a new TID (Tax Incremental District) and the use of TIF (Tax Incremental Financing) to help the developer cover project costs, and also requested that the city design and construct a public plaza, a pedestrian bridge, and a bike trail. (The reader will learn more about TIF later in the chapter, but briefly it is a financing mechanism used by local governments to partner with private developers in redevelopment projects by paying for bonding on capital investments with the increased property tax revenues created by development.) The decision about whether to create this TIF became a major tension point in the project. The developer's letter estimated the public cost at $2.3 million.

In February 2010, the City Manager responded in a letter saying the proposal was "very exciting … and would enhance the public space along the confluence of the [two rivers] in downtown… Your initial proposal is consistent with the city's 2001 Downtown Action Agenda and the goals of the 2005 Comprehensive Land Use Plan". The letter also said the city was aware that the costs of infrastructure improvement would be significant and offered that the city would work with the developer. "We are very supportive of your efforts to invigorate [downtown]… and working together we can complete a stunning downtown project that will be the cornerstone of further revitalization efforts for generations". This letter signified that the City Manager had

already defined a public purpose for the project and could offer the city's support. Though, as the reader will learn, there were many hurdles to overcome.

Public/Private Partnerships

It is important to pause briefly to explain why public/private partnerships are compelling to both sides. There are several reasons. First on the private side, though developers own land the city regulates land use. If a developer needs to rezone property, as it did for the Arts Center for example, the city must approve the rezoning request. Second, cities can levy taxes for borrowing on capital expenses often at a lower cost than a private developer, as a result, using the city's borrowing capacity lowers construction costs for the developer. Cities also have site plan approval, which means buildings must be consistent with standards established by local ordinance. This incentivizes developers to work closely with cities to ensure their project complies with set standards. Further, cities are responsible for traffic control, which can be especially challenging in urban centers. Streets may need reconstruction to accommodate increased volume, for example. (This turned out to be the case in this project.) Lastly, the city was an attractive partner because it could make public improvements to the city-owned land adjacent to the Arts Center, which would complement the Center at a cost not born by the developer.

The public sector is also interested in working with private developers. There are several reasons for this as well. One is noted in the City Manager's letter referenced above - developers can help cities reach redevelopment goals such as blight elimination, beautification, and quasi-public amenities like arts centers that improve the quality of life for citizens. Cities keep pace with providing essential public services and solid infrastructure, but they rarely can afford non-

essential services like arts centers; but developers can. Also, well-planned development is good for cities because it increases property value and therefore property tax revenue - the lifeblood of a city's revenue stream. When the value of property rises, tax revenue rises with it. (It is a bit more complicated than that but well enough stated for my purposes.) The reader may recall from Chapter One that growth had become an imperative for cities since the mid-1900's, lacking sufficient state and federal aid. All this aside, however, the main test for whether the public sector is willing to partner with the private sector is that the city identifies a public good in doing so. This is what the City Manager was defending in her letter.

Now, back to the story line. For the next eighteen months the city and the project partners worked back and forth on an increasingly sophisticated development agreement. By this time, a complex partnership had formed between the project partners – the developer and the university. That adult beverage encounter that happened two years earlier had transformed itself into an elegant plan for a shared Arts Center. The next sections describe the plan in detail.

The Project Takes Shape

The greater project included three parts: An Arts Center, a public plaza, and a student housing/mixed use building (mixed use means mixed commercial and residential uses under one roof). The three parts were situated on lots adjacent to one another. My study focused primarily on the Arts Center, but here I briefly describe the other two parts because they were connected in time, importance, and proximity.

Parts of the Greater Project

Student housing evolved as part of this project in response to the university's need for additional housing, a need it identified in its new campus master plan. Student housing in the

downtown was desirable because it was within an acceptable radius of campus and many students already lived in apartments in the city center. Through the university's foundation, the prospect of buying property next to the project site became possible. An early idea was to create a living/learning community for art students who would spend a major part of their classroom time at the Arts Center (project overview report, January 2013).

One of the most contentious debates over student housing was razing several historic buildings on the site. The local Landmarks Commission mounted a concerted and impressive effort to block the razing of one of the buildings by applying for a national historic designation and appealing to the City Council to prevent it. At the same time however, the City Council learned of many serious structural and flooding problems with the buildings. After the national designation was denied, and upon the protest of the property owner who did not want a historic designation, the buildings were purchased by the Foundation and ultimately razed (City Council minutes, December 10, 2013). But the city delayed demolition until historic elements of the buildings could be salvaged. Construction of student housing finished in 2016 and today several hundred university students live on the top three floors, while an ice cream parlor and other commercial businesses dot the ground floor below.

Another part of the greater project was a public plaza on city-owned land between student housing and the Arts Center. Its pie-piece shaped lot boasted a long-curved border along the riverfront, which sadly had been neglected for years (see Chapter Four). Even sadder, the parcel was an eyesore with a crumbling parking lot scattered with tilted and rusting parking meters. It often sat vacant because of its poor condition and perceived danger in the dark (see Figure 6). The initial letter from the developer invited the city to improve this parcel by making it into a public plaza that accentuated the rivers and the Arts Center.

Figure 6

Public Plaza Site Prior to Construction, two views looking east and north, 2009

Courtesy of [Clearwater] City Engineer

The city took its time to contemplate what a new public plaza might look like and cost, including a fiscal analysis and public input from over 75 citizens who participated in an exercise led by a local redevelopment agency. The city used this public input to help design a new plaza, which it completed in 2019. Today it hosts many visitors who come to enjoy its amenities and a breathtaking view of the river. (See Figures 7a. and 7b.)

Arts Center Detail Takes Shape

The primary focus of my study was the Arts Center part of the greater project. The remainder of this chapter returns to that story. As reported earlier, a May 15, 2012 press conference, provided the first public announcement of a redevelopment project in downtown Clearwater. The project partners presented an idea that would combine performing arts and arts education in a center at the confluence of two downtown rivers. The university spoke for the need to replace its crumbling theatre and expand its arts education space, affirming consistency with its master plan and educational goals. While the developer proclaimed the project "transformational", declaring that it would speed up the city's "cultural evolution".

But the local newspaper had a more cautious view.

> … while the project would meet two community needs – a larger arts venue and student living space- and beautify underused land and be a boon to downtown… will it sacrifice historic buildings…will students add vibrancy to downtown… what about adequate parking… can the city afford it. Those behind the plan deserve credit for thinking boldly about how to improve the city…
>
> (editor's opinion piece, May 14, 2012)

The project proposed a 130,000 square foot arts center with three theatres, multiple classrooms, galleries, back of house space (space needed for production), offices, and public common areas, with a preliminary construction cost of $48 million. The developer hired a

financial analysis firm to provide community impact estimates from anticipated arts spending. It reported that Clearwater could expect arts related spending between $14.07 and $22.51 per person, per event (Economic Impacts and Potential Funding Sources report, May 3, 2012). Another economic impact report commissioned by the developer anticipated total direct expenditures of $4.6 million, supporting 141 jobs and local government tax revenue of almost $50,000 in three years. The report also calculated $20,000 in additional sales tax revenue and $67,000 in added room tax revenue, and a 30% increase in property values within 3 years ([Arts Center] Economic Impact Analysis, December 2011).

The Project gets its First Feedback and Backlash

Within months of the 2012 press conference, the developer hired another consulting firm to create a comprehensive business plan and pro forma (preliminary) budget. According to the firm's literature, their business included management, consulting, and event services for performing arts centers, arenas, and convention centers throughout the US. Their final report was the project's first critical look from an outsider – the first tangible evidence that the idea would, or would not, work. The report was published in April 2013.

The executive summary acknowledged this unique project:

> We believe [Clearwater] is well positioned to benefit from the development of this exciting quality of life project… the project will capitalize on the favorable environment currently realized in the [Clearwater] region… a unique collaboration has evolved bringing the programming of the university and community arts groups together in one venue…

and offered this caveat:

> Very few performing arts centers of the type described in this plan are profitable without operation allocations from various funding sources. In most cases, annual earned revenues are less than annual operating expenses ... [however] the partnership agreements [in this model] may allow

opportunities where collaboration could reduce costs for each entity.

The project partners were relieved to learn the model had a chance of working, but the report stirred up public opposition. At a public hearing in October 2013 the Council got an ear full. This transcript comes directly from the public record of that meeting:

> "Theatres are wonderful. But only those in large metro areas have the economies of scale to run profitably. Fortunately, there are many who love the arts and are willing to support these ventures with significant charitable donations. [Another arts center in our state] loses $4-5 million each year, offset by private donations and [an arts center in a neighboring state] has lost money every year, even with charitable donations. The city is covering that shortfall…" (speaker at public hearing)

But other citizens supported the idea, like one native son turned international performer who said "Music venues fail because of bureaucracy. Be creative. Those that succeed offer perfect venues for performers and create jobs. There are arts centers in this state that do it right." Project partners paid attention to these first glimpses of the tension the project might evoke – arts centers fail so keep the public's money out of this one vs. arts centers do not have to fail if they are perfect. Break out of your iron-cage bureaucracy and do it right.

The Arts Center Approval Process and Main Tension Points

Once the city was asked to participate in the Arts Center project it set in motion a City Council approval process, which is the topic of this section. The constraints of this dissertation do not accommodate a full account of every step in this complex process, but I trust I offered enough detail to help the reader appreciate the enormity of this undertaking over ten, nail-biting years from idea to opening curtain.

Funding the Project

Over the three years after the project's announcement, project partners worked on the design, operations, and funding for the Arts Center. Some of the main tension points arose from

their efforts to find funding. The project was large and expensive, making a cooperative effort necessary. It ranked among the costliest redevelopment projects in the city's history. The preliminary (2012) estimate at $48 million later rose to $51.2 million. In addition, the developers requested $9.9 million in local public expenditures for site preparation, a public trail, a plaza, and a new parking ramp (Project Update, September 2012*).*

University and State Appeals

The first of many funding hurdles was overcome in late 2012 when the university system stated its support for the concept in a resolution from its governing body, the Board of Regents (BOR). But ultimately funding from this source did not materialize when, in August 2014, the BOR denied Clearwater's funding request, despite many in-person appeals from project leaders in Clearwater. Subsequently, the State Legislature, which approves the University System budget, directed the project to a different funding called a non-state agency grant. Project leaders complied by submitting a grant application that required City Council support, which passed with nine "aye" votes and two "nays" (City Council minutes, Sept. 9, 2014). With Council approval in hand, project leaders lobbied the State Legislature. But when the state's powerful Joint Finance Committee (JFC) met in May 2015, the project was dealt another defeat. The JFC recommended that the Arts Center spend more time proving its value to the state and return with that proof in June 2017.

But Arts Center leaders persisted. Local contacts with access to the Governor pursued a last-ditch effort to convince the Governor to include $15 million for the Arts Center in the capital building budget. At last, some good news came when project leaders were notified that the JFC voted to replace funding to "construct an Arts Center at the confluence of two rivers in

downtown [Clearwater]", assumedly at the direction of the Governor (Executive Session, Joint Committee on Finance, May 27, 2015). The resolution allocated funds via a Non-State Agency grant but required the project to raise funds "equal to the amount of the grant" and said the state retained an ownership interest equal to the amount of its grant.

Local Public Funding

Simultaneous to this state funding drama, the City Council prepared to take up a request for local public funding of the Arts Center. The request was for $5 million in public expenditure. The story must now go back in time for a bit. For a year after the project's announcement in 2012, city staff worked with the developer on the parameters of an agreement for development of the property, including the expenditure of public money. The City Council received frequent updates during this time. Sometimes at regularly scheduled public meetings, sometimes in specially scheduled public work sessions, and sometimes in closed sessions. Closed Sessions are permitted for well-defined reasons pursuant to State Statute – s. 19.85(1)(e). They were used sparingly and under the direction of the City Attorney. The public was invited to attend and speak at all meetings, except those in closed session. The developer and city council met at least three times in 2013 – January, May, and July, as the process hurled toward a resolution authorizing a $5 million pledge to the Arts Center scheduled in October 2013.

Hearing from the Public

People had many questions about spending that much public money. One meeting alone yielded over twenty-five questions. This sample exemplifies the breadth of inquiry:

- Is it possible to renovate [Clearwater's] old theatre?
- Will the Arts Center be affordable for local arts organizations?
- Is there any alternative to a public investment in capital and operating costs?

- Can the building be moved to the center of the three-part project and be built to look like a glass, two-story fan overlooking the river?
- What is the likely impact on property taxes?
- Could the Arts Center book Willie Nelson?
- How will the city know if the university has budgeted enough to afford their part of the building?

(Notes from July 15, 2013 Work Session)

People also expressed concerns via various news outlets. In August, a local chapter of the Tea Party urged its members to talk with City Council before the October vote. A summary of their concerns included 1.) Bonding for a "want" when the city can't meet needs 2.) Tourism dollars would prop up the Arts Center at the expense of other tourism 3.) Throwing money at a shiny new facility was foolish when the existing regional arts association couldn't make a go of it 4.) Taxpayers would be stuck with the bill when the project fell short because the "same pot we take from to fund schools will fund this "shenanigan" (email responses to Arts Center project concerns, July 29, 2013).

But support was expressed too. One of the large medical facilities in the city sent a letter saying that the Arts Center project would help them recruit talent. The local Chamber passed a resolution in support, citing the project's potential to "contribute to economic and business development…" (Resolution, Chamber Board, June 25, 2012). A local Grammy award winning artist said the Arts Center would bring artists home to experience this "unique identity in the arts world (letter, September 23, 2012).

City Council Takes up a Funding Pledge

The City Council held a public hearing in October 2013 on the resolution to pledge $5 million to the Arts Center. The room was packed with people who wanted to speak; they did so for more than two hours. Those in opposition said spending public money on an arts project was

not a “voluntary community donation that could generate excitement but an involuntary funding campaign to get at tax dollars” (observation notes, City Council meeting, YouTube). But those in support urged public funding to fulfill a long-standing city goal to revitalize downtown.

The next night the Council debated, and after several amendments, approved a resolution pledging $5 million and entering into a development agreement with the developer (City Council minutes, October 22, 2013). But contingencies in the resolution set in motion another set of hurdles including: a requirement for state funding, philanthropy, a sustainable operating model, and a guaranteed property tax increment of $21 million. A major challenge was the order to create a new Tax Increment District (TID) and use Tax Increment Financing (TIF). TIF funding is a mechanism that allows municipalities to negotiate developments with private developers in the city’s best interest. Municipalities fund improvements through property tax revenue on newly developed property in the Tax Incremental District (TID). As Property values rise, the municipality uses the increment to pay for bonding on projects in the TID. After the project costs are paid, the TID is closed. A key basis for TIF is the “but for” clause affirming that the development would not happen “but for “ the use of TIF (www.revenue.wi.gov/tif-manual.pdf). The most common objection is that while the TID is open, property tax increment is diverted from public spending to pay off the capital investment. But the public benefits eventually, when the increased tax revenue from improved properties puts the municipality ahead of where it would have been without the improvements.

Some citizens objected to using TIF. They said that it might be appropriate to “use city funds to build roads and other infrastructure or improve blight, but it was not appropriate to … contribute to a project owned by a private party… (public comments, August 11, 2014). They also said that the city claimed blight on properties that were not blighted and wanted to know

how that determination was made. The city issued a rebuttal to their objections, defending the blight designation and asserting that the "but for" condition was met (email to City Council from finance director, September 5, 2014). By October 2014, the Council took up TIF funding in a public hearing. The president of the Redevelopment Authority (RDA), a quasi-public entity that prepares underutilized land for redevelopment, testified that the RDA had been trying to improve this area of downtown for nineteen years and here was a chance to do that. After another lengthy debate, the Council approved the TIF mechanism.

The Development Agreement

During the remainder of 2014 and much of 2015 the City continued negotiating with the developer toward a development agreement. In general language, a development agreement acts as a legal document that sets the parameters with private developers that will protect the public good. (The public good may be defined as anything that benefits more than one person, but not every person - as that would be impossible.)

It took more than a year to work through this process. Two problems arose along the way. First, because the negotiations were often held in closed session, the Council was accused of an Open Meetings violation for improperly holding two closed sessions. The complaint by a citizen group alleged that the City Council violated Open Meetings Law, which dictates that all but specific business must be conducted in open public meetings. The District Attorney reviewed the complaint and decided in favor of the City Council; prompting the citizen group to dismiss the complaint in November (Answer to Defendant Common Council of City of [Clearwater], November 17, 2014). Secondly, in March 2015, the same citizen group filed a lawsuit with the county claiming a violation of Tax Incremental Financing Law. The lawsuit contended that the

city did not meet two conditions 1.) Did not establish existing blight 2.) Did not prove the "but for" clause (www.witt-law.org – a pseudonym). The city mounted a defense and after review, the Circuit Court dismissed the case in August. But the group appealed to the state Court of Appeals, which in May 2017 affirmed the dismissal in all but one claim. But, in July 2017 the group filed for review by the state Supreme Court. After a successful defense by the city attorney's office, in June 2018, the state Supreme Court decided in favor of the city ([Clearwater] newspaper front page, July 20, 2019). The City Council was found not to be in violation of Open Meetings or TIF laws. Relieved at the outcome, the city proceeded with its task of approving a development agreement.

Finally, on the evening of November 10, 2015 the Council approved a development agreement for the Arts Center. The agreement is a 65-page document that sets the parameters for construction timelines, work quality, default and cure, and the governance and operations of the Center. The document became the foundation upon which rested all the expectations of the public sector, the risk and rewards of the project partners, and the hopes of project supporters.

Citizen Led Dueling Referenda

As the legal issues were winding through the courts, the City began to hear rumblings of a citizen led effort to order a referendum on funding the Arts Center. And indeed, in December the Council received a petition for direct legislation (a referendum) on the April 2014 ballot. At the same time, [Clearwater] county placed a referendum question on their ballot asking whether county citizens wanted to "help fund the construction of the [Arts Center]" (Official proceedings of the county board, January 21, 2014). If the referendum passed, the county guaranteed a pledge of $3.5 million.

These dual referenda set off a maelstrom of public energy - for and against the Arts Center. Citizen groups formed on both sides to advocate their point of view. On the opposition side, a group called “Citizens with Truth” (a pseudonym). On the other side a group called “Speaking for Art” (also a pseudonym). Both platforms were active venues for the public funding debate, but the “Speaking for Art” group shined. (I write about this effort in Chapter 7.)

City voters decided the referenda in favor of the Arts Center by a 60/40% margin. And 54% of county voters approved the county expenditure ([Clearwater] newspaper, April 2, 2014). An opinion piece by the newspaper editor declared “Message delivered: This is the project, and now is the time” ([Clearwater] newspaper, Opinion page, April 3, 2014). The referenda invigorated project supporters, who still had work to do before the Center opened.

The above description of the often-bumpy process of the Arts Center’s approval sets the stage for a more granular analysis in succeeding chapters. Here, I have only touched the surface of the number of interactions between Council Members and citizens, and between supporters and those in opposition. But first I must complete this part of the story with a return to fundraising with private philanthropy. As the reader may recall, the Development Agreement required successful local philanthropy before public funds would be expended.

Local Philanthropy

By May 2015 local philanthropy total reached $13.5 million. But the Development Agreement required more, so many appeals to local philanthropists and citizens got underway. For example, one project supporter visited every civic club in the city, preaching the economics of the project, saying cities are the engine of economic growth. The audience understood the

message and gave money. “People in [Clearwater] were at the forefront of giving” the project supporter said in her interview.

There were other broad-based community appeals. People hosted small events in their homes and school groups sold art to raise money. Local businesses pledged large amounts. Two theatres in the building are named after the largest business donors and the building itself after another. A social media group “Community for the [Arts Center]” (a pseudonym) put its platform to work posting fundraising events like a local women’s apparel shop that held a fashion show, a Patio Concert from a local radio station, and a guitar maker who offered a handmade guitar. The [Clearwater] Community Foundation served as a fiscal agent for donors who were already accustomed to giving to the Foundation. The local university Foundation, through its tireless director, appealed to alumni across the country, saying the project would benefit students and the campus they fondly remembered. The final cost of constructing the Arts Center was near $60 million. A recent newspaper article reported about $7 million remained on that debt (front page, “Closing the Gap” August 25, 2019).

At the time of this writing total private philanthropy had reached $33 million.

Building the Arts Center

With the fundraising effort in full swing, citizens were now invited to participate in designing the Arts Center building. For six months, a committee of local citizens and experts pushed around a big city architect with some hard-nosed, Midwest frugality before it approved a final design. The final design, also approved by the Plan Commission and Waterways Commission, called for three story high building with exterior walls made of state sourced stone and copper. (See Figures 7a. and 7b.) After final approval by the City Council, construction

began with a groundbreaking ceremony in October 2016. Seven years after that serendipitous conversation, the building finally started to take shape. There was great fanfare at the groundbreaking. Dignitaries lined up to speak and have their picture taken in golden hard hats, holding golden shovels. Project leaders were relieved and exhausted but waiting to exhale until the Center opened its doors. But on this day, everyone rested.

The construction company sent a drone over the site every few days shooting footage of an impressive building rising out of the ground. People leaned against the wire construction fence during their lunch hour to watch a hundred-foot crane sway back and forth in slow motion like a mythic dinosaur clutching its prey in its powerful steel jaws. It was amazing to watch.

Figure 7a.

The Arts Center at Dusk, 2020

Courtesy of the contractor

Figure 7b.

The Arts Center at Night, 2020

Courtesy of the contractor

Operating the Arts Center

One last piece of this project must be briefly presented before I end the chapter - how the Center would operate. As the building was rising out of the ground and money was pouring in, attention turned to creating a viable shared-use operating model. A viable Arts Center was considered to be one that operated fully without public backup.

A shared-use model was familiar because Clearwater already shared many functions between public partners (see Chapter Four). The plan was that the University would use a portion of the building for instruction and the community would use the other for theatre production. The Center would also house revenue producing uses like tourism, art galleries, recording studios,

and meeting rooms. Creating this shared model required a monumental effort and an intricate ownership scheme. The gist of which is that the Arts Center is owned by a non-profit organization that oversees another board responsible for its operation. The city is protected from "saving the Arts Center" by two distinct mechanisms that limit the city's financial responsibility.

The shared model was a concern for some local arts organizations who worried about ticket prices going up or that the university would gobble up desirable performance dates. Despite these concerns, people poured their energy into molding a cooperative model with a mission-like zeal to make the shared space a reality. At the time of this writing, multiple users filled the Arts Center seven days a week for the first two years, much as it was envisioned.

The Arts Center Opens

On September 16, 2018, the [Clearwater] newspaper featured a story anticipating the opening of the new Arts Center. Titled, "Act 1, Scene 1" it read "a shining star is about to make its public debut with free afternoon celebrations and an evening gala". The Chamber director said it was like the movie Field of Dreams - we built it; they will come. The new Arts Center director said the project was the heart of the city and should not be taken lightly; the business boost began even before the curtain went up. The building opened with great fanfare, the mood of the crowd was invincible. If we could do this, we could do anything. 5,000 people spent the afternoon taking in the Center for the first time. Another 1,000 spent the evening enjoying local performances and tasty local food. It was a perfect ending.

Chapter Summary

This chapter chronicled the story of how a city put everything it had into building an Arts Center. An idea that was born in a chance meeting, took shape over a decade to create a first-of-

its-kind center for the arts. The grand idea that it would be a shared place filled with eager university students working side by side with seasoned artists perfecting their craft challenged a city to think about how far it was willing to go to support the arts. But the grand idea was expensive and finding the money a herculean task. Funding had to come from everywhere - the state, the university, business, and lots and lots of regular people – and it did. Lots of regular people helped design the building too and figure out how to operate it. Because of this work, a bold and beautiful Arts Center now stands in the center of a mid-sized city in the Midwest where people mistakenly think nothing ever happens.

A study participant summed up her thoughts about this accomplishment:

> I have a 10-year-old daughter. Just last summer, right after they opened the Center, we were down there and she's playing in the water fountain. And you couldn't do that before.
>
> I'm not the only one there; there are all kinds of families. It's quite clear that some are quite affluent, and some are not so affluent families. All these kids are playing there, it's in the center of the city, and man, I've been around here long enough to remember when you probably wouldn't even bring your kids to that corner, whether you're rich or poor. So, the idea that it's not a net-sum game, I find not very credible.

The truth is, however, as laborious and exhausting as the process was for negotiating a shared use agreement and securing funding, this chapter fails to capture the leadership strategies that went on behind the scenes. In the next chapter I begin an analysis of my core question: what strategies it took to lead this complex project.

CHAPTER SIX

A Municipal Drama, Act I: The Beauty of Ordering Principles

> So, I find politics very problematic and don't want to participate in it again. I don't feel I'm up to it. I don't like where it takes me as a person. Politics is all about the construction of consensus to achieve a desired goal. Individuals have sets of tastes and preferences and desires which are divergent from others. So, the construction of consensus requires the creation of tastes and preferences among large sets of individuals that are congruent with a broader purpose. In other words, you must make people like things they wouldn't have otherwise liked.
>
> Study Participant – former city council member

Introduction

Erving Goffman and William Shakespeare said all the world's a stage. More precisely, Goffman said all the world is a social drama - complete with scripts, performers, and stages. This study examined one of those social dramas. In it, the city of Clearwater set the stage for a municipal drama starring many citizen actors playing their parts as champions or adversaries in an unscripted dialogue with elected leaders, who had the power to make the Arts Center project happen, or make it go away.

Chapter Five reviewed the Arts Center as a typical municipal and political process. Its significant detail laid out the timeline, costs, and conflicts that were part of this decade-long project. But description is not enough for analyzing the strategies leaders used – the main interest of this dissertation. For that, one must dig deep to unearth how key leaders molded and responded to events. The reader has likely surmised that it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to analyze every twist and turn in this complex story. To overcome this challenge, I chose to analyze three scenes as representative of the whole story, as if adapting a long novel to the theatre.

The concepts of several scholars helped build this dissertation's underlying analytic framework - Goffman's dramaturgy built the fundamental structure and dramatic approach; Bourdieu's habitus and symbolic capital wrote the script; Flyvbjerg's phronesis magnified the player's actions; LaMagdeleine's taxonomy helped dissect the project's leadership; and deRoo's anchoring qualities informed an examination of a tactical response to social complexity. The concepts that are especially germane to each section will be briefly re-introduced in the dramatic scenes ahead.

But first, I pause to clarify that the purpose of my study was not to write an instructional manual for leaders considering a similar action in their cities - though leadership scholars have called for more action research in the social sciences (Simmons in Flyvbjerg, 2012; Freeman, 2019). Rather, it was my intent to produce a meaningful case study of a specific situation through the reflections of someone who lived the experience. In response to Bourdieu's (Wacqyant, 2004, p. 11) demand for reflexivity as "essential to social science" the reader will encounter reflexive statements written by me throughout these last two chapters. They are meant to enhance the data through my reflective insights. This was not a "view from nowhere" analysis (Flyvbjerg, et al, 2012, p.293) but a reflection backed by 25 years of practicing local politics. I tried to present a warts-and-all analysis of a situated leadership experience in local government in which I was an integral player.

Overview

In the next two chapters I analyze three mini dramas (dramaturgy) that illustrate the major tension points during Clearwater's efforts to build a new Arts Center and illuminate a practical wisdom in leadership (phronesis) that was evident throughout. The setting for the first

drama is the city council meeting on September 24, 2012 that convened the first public discussion of the project. The second drama moves ahead in time to April 2014 during a citizen led referendum about publicly funding the project. And the last travels to the state capital where project leaders made a pitch for financial support during the last half of 2015. Using Goffman's dramaturgical perspective, each dramatic scene contains actors, performances, and a stage.

The Stage

I began this dissertation with an argument that cities provide a legitimate context for situated social/political science inquires. As such, Chapter Four set a contextual stage with a detailed history of Clearwater's dispositions, habits, and values. The reader learned that this mid-sized Midwestern city had a history of mediocre redevelopment efforts in its city center – a place it nevertheless felt an affection for. It also had a penchant for working together in trusted like-minded groups and an impulse for accommodating citizens in decision making. It loved the arts, sometimes as a stimulus for economic growth and sometimes as an intrinsic good. And had developed a habit of local government that valued a mix of efficiency and democracy.

Key Actors

A small group of key actors anchor the action in the next two chapters. Many people were involved in leading this project, but it defied the limits of this dissertation to include all of them in the analysis, so I selected a smaller group of key actors as representative of broader leadership. To aid the reader through the chapters that follow I assigned each key actor an acronym. Some represent more than one person, but their work was so closely aligned I referred to them with one acronym. The first actor I called PV – the prime visionary and chief architect. Her singular vision and passion for the project was unmatched by any other supporter. Another

key actor I called UL – university leaders. These people represent excellence in promoting the university's interests and community relations. Another I called CP – Council President. This is me. Another actor is the City Council, which I labeled CM – Council Member/s. The individual members of Council changed overtime, so this acronym is reflective of collective political action and attitudes. Another actor I called TS – Tech Savvy creative entrepreneurs. These people hailed mostly from the business sector, with expertise in start-ups, finance, development, political organizing, and information technology. They were passionately connected to Clearwater and saw themselves as instrumental to her future growth. Lastly, I labeled a local opposition group, OG. They were a small group of local citizens with varying backgrounds, whose primary leader was a native of Clearwater with a family business that stretched back in the city's history.

As a quick reference, I provide a list of key actors and their acronym.

PV – prime visionary
UL – university leader
CP – council president
TS – tech savvy
CM – council member
OG – opposition group

ACT I, SCENE I: Pedagogy in the Ways of Government

Act I dramatizes the first major decision the City Council made about whether to support the Arts Center. First, I re-introduce some key concepts and set the stage for analysis.

Key Concepts

The analysis of this first mini drama utilized several theoretical concepts introduced earlier. As a brief reminder they are: Bourdieu's (1989) concept of habitus as the common

dispositions that dispose actors to certain actions; Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical lens that views social space as a stage with front and backstage performances, and especially how teams cooperate on stage in unified performances; deRoo's (2018) anchoring qualities that stabilize complex systems; and Grint's (2010) leadership model of collective engagement that addresses wicked problems.

Actors and Audiences

Part of Goffman's dramaturgical framework described how actors work as a tightknit team in a unified performance. The team enjoys the camaraderie of a shared mission, but they also expect team members to toe the line with the agreed message. The Arts Center project had such a team I called the "core team."

The Core Team. At first, the core team was small, including only PV (project visionary) and UL (university administrators), and a local contractor who lent engineering expertise to the team. It is important to describe PV in more detail because much of the full throttle energy came from her. PV was a person with significant professional respect and personal integrity – cultural capital in Bourdieu's words. Years earlier she helped develop a large tract of land in Clearwater that ultimately became a regional shopping hub, generating increased land value and jobs. Prior to that PV spearheaded a push to bring a sports arena downtown, which was nixed by the City Council at the time. Nearing retirement now, PV took on the Arts Center project with a quixotic zeal. A participant I interviewed, who worked closely with her, described her as a "person who wanted to make life better for citizens and help Clearwater be successful… a lighthouse bringing people together; a guiding light during stormy times." Sadly, PV passed of a serious disease

before the Arts Center opened. But her legacy spurred large scale philanthropic giving, for which a portion of the building is named in her honor.

A small cast of characters completes the core team. UL's were high level university administrators who headed university development, and facilities and community relations. The reader learned earlier that UL was likely the person whose idea for a shared Arts Center started everything. They were respected professionals who had magnificently increased the value of the University Foundation's portfolio and skillfully broken down "town/gown" barriers over the years. The last core team member was a Clearwater native whose contracting company bore the family name and owned the land on which the Arts Center was built.

The core team was self-aware of its role and its task. As one said:

> Interviewer: Who do you think were the movers and shakers in this project?
>
> Participant: Certainly, the movers and shakers kept it going, even though there were champions all over the place at many different levels. That's the only way it worked because it hadn't been done before. We weren't pointing to something saying, we can replicate this. This is what somebody else did. There's a proven track record and we're going to replicate it.
>
> What we said was 'We don't know anybody who's done this before. It's risky. We're mitigating risk because nobody is putting in so much of their own treasure that it could catastrophically ruin them. We're all sharing that risk…' It's hard. Partnerships are great but they're hard and you have to build trust and then you hold hands and jump into the deep end… Because it's not just about the list of ingredients, the steps that you need to follow. It's about recognizing your self-interest, checking that self-interest at the door, and putting the project first, knowing that we all have to give up something in order to get something. That kind of give and take is rare.

And this response to the same question from another core team member:

> … so it was a group banded together by their shared vision for what Clearwater could be. And they're understanding that this isn't just replacing a theater, it's not just replacing the campus venue, it's not just building housing in downtown, it's creating an ecosystem that supports the interests of students as well as the interests of millennial and tech workers who would expect a vibrant cultural scene. And more

> than anything, people who believed that could be done, not only saw the benefits of it, but believed it could happen here.

And from a university student leader closely connected to the core team said:

> … the idea that we can do more together than we can apart. And to see it come to fruition is remarkable. Not only because we remember how uncertain it was and how it was truly a small and mighty group that brought an idea from nothing into something …
>
> As Conan O'Brien said, "Nobody gets exactly what they think they're going to out of life, but if you work hard and you're kind, amazing things can happen." And that epitomized this grassroots effort of a bunch of hardworking people who genuinely cared and believed that we could do something better together. To see that all happen as a 20-year-old, I will forever be optimistic about what can be accomplished when a group comes together.

These core team members conjure up the essence of Goffman's dramaturgical team as a synergistic group upon whose intense cooperation a performance depends (1959, p. 83).

The Audience. From a dramaturgical perspective, the intended audience for the core team's performance was the City Council because they would caste the vote that decided whether to take the first step toward supporting the Arts Center. The core team understood that it must capture a majority of Council votes to win – six of eleven votes.

The sitting Council was a seasoned group totaling 41 years of collective service in local political office. Six years earlier, one third of them approved another downtown redevelopment project across from the Arts Center (see Chapter Four). At this point most CM's had not publicly declared their support or opposition, but there were clues about where they stood. Early in September the core team invited CM's to an update on the project and took questions from Members. CM questions provided insights into their stance, summarized below:

- The city wants to see a full operating pro-forma budget, especially how costs will be divided

- What will happen to the old city theatre and its assets?
- The city does not want to take on all the risk
- Where will people park?
- What is the city's capital cost?

In Goffman-like terms, this update offered the core team the advantage of knowing their audience before the performance started. And exemplified the advantage of Chia's (2009) "strategic emergence" when the core team capitalized on CM's utterances. Because they paid attention, they saw fiscal concern, risk aversion, affection for an old landmark, and recognition of increased parking demands. With this knowledge they delivered the perfect script for the public meeting discussed in Scene II.

Act I, Scene II: Ordering Principles

On September 24, 2012, the City Council was scheduled to make its first decision on the Arts Center. The public hearing included a presentation on the project, followed by public comment, discussion, and ultimately a Council decision at its legislative session the next day.

A Stage for Decision Making

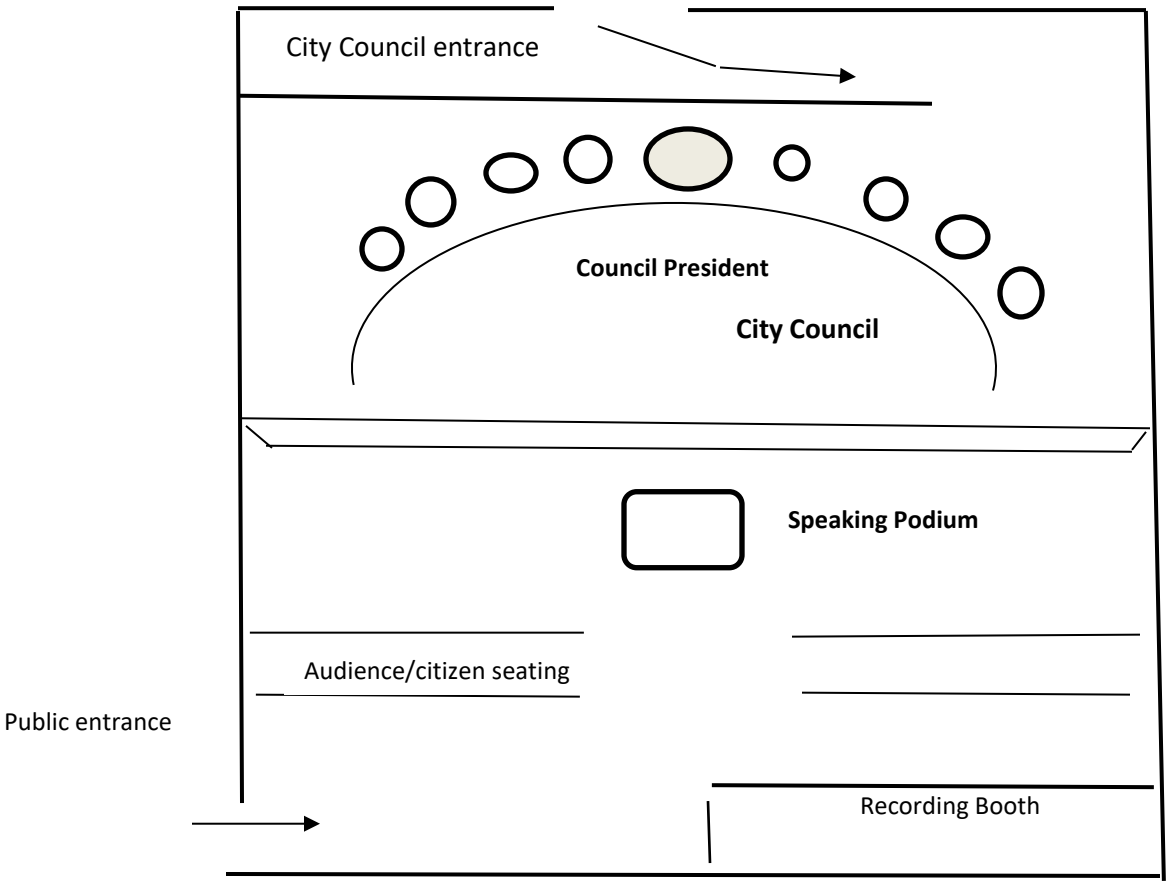
Structure played a part in the Council's decision making, both in the physical setting and meeting protocol. From a dramaturgical perspective, the physical setting acts like a stage to define the reality of the performance. In this case, the "stage" was meant to signal that serious work transpired in this place.

The City Council conducted its public meetings in a room called Council Chambers - a somber, and ironically neglected, room buried deep in City Hall. On meeting nights, the Council entered the room from a back door, passing by a noisy furnace room as they did. They stopped to hang their coats on old schoolhouse hooks anchored high on the wall of this narrow and dimly lit

room and then walked up a carpeted incline to an opening at the end of a partitioned wall. Once inside, they took their seats behind a semi-circle of connected wooden desks perched on an elevated dais fixed at one end of the room. (See Figure 8.) Members had assigned seats that were divvied out once a year by a process of selecting numbers out of a hat. This randomness avoided the uncomfortable jockeying of who sits by whom. Each seat had its own microphone, which helped the public hear and captured an audio recording from the media booth tucked behind a glass wall at the other end of the room. When CM's wished to speak, they turned on a red light in front of their desk. They waited to be recognized by CP, the Council President, which I did in a first come order. I sat in the center of the semi-circle - signaling a Goffman like place of elevated importance. The City Manager and the City Attorney rounded out the semi-circle.

FIGURE 8

City Council Chambers



The public entered through a door at the opposite end of the room from the Council. Just outside was a large vestibule with closed circuit monitors suspended from the ceiling so people could watch from the lobby when the room was crowded. When people entered the room, they took their seats in tight rows of uncomfortable chairs facing the Council dais, which was separated by an eight-foot empty space between the first row and the dais. At times of high drama, the random and tight seating arrangement was quite uncomfortable for the public. In the space between the public seating and the Council dais, a large podium marked where people rose to address the Council. A two-headed microphone affixed to the podium broadcast the speaker's voice to the room and for an audio recording. Sometimes the microphone did not work very well, but it was old and heavily used. An overhead camera captured the materials speakers brought to support their arguments: maps, drawings, letters, photos, etc. Occasionally it also captured the top of the speaker's head – we were witness to many growing bald spots over the years. We were polite.

As CP, the structure of council meetings was a powerful ritual in the service of good governance. I conducted very formal meetings. People were only addressed by their surname or title. I did not allow clapping, or signs, or noise. I limited speaking to five minutes, though citizens could speak again once everyone else had a first turn. CM's never addressed one another by first name, but as "Council Member". They were only allowed to speak after I recognized them by announcing "CM X" has the floor, and I cut off their speech if it became overly argumentative, which I could do from my microphone.

At the start of each meeting, I delivered a short statement about what to expect and what behavior was allowed. From deRoos' (2018) perspective this acted as a repeating set of anchoring qualities that offered much-needed order and preparation for chaos, should it come. In

Goffman's (1963) terms, my statement set a stage and script for the dramaturgy of recurring City Council meetings. But from Bourdieu's (1989) perspective it could also have been a form of symbolic violence – using the symbolism of my office to demand a certain behavior by inculcating the "state's" narrative. But my directive was not meant as such. I spoke primarily to the citizens who may be there for their first face to face interaction with elected officials and wanted them to have a positive impression of how their government was run. But some of my lesson was also a reminder to CM's about our expected demeanor - we were there to listen, not to pontificate. The script for my short didactic went like this:

> Welcome to the Monday, _____, session of the Clearwater City Council. During this session the City Council conducts hearings that listen to public input, invite public comment, and asks questions in preparation for our legislative session tomorrow at 4 PM.
>
> For those who wish to speak, I briefly review the protocol:
>
> Please take your turn at the podium when I call for public input
> Begin by stating your name and address for the public record
> Council welcomes you to speak on your issue for a full 5 minutes
> but you do not have to speak for the full 5 minutes.
> When your 5 minutes are up the Chair will politely ask that you
> bring your remarks to a close
> Council may have questions after you finish, so please remain at the
> podium until I ask if there are questions.
>
> For those waiting to speak, we do not assign a cue for or against an item. We trust that citizens know how to be polite and ask that you approach the podium when there is an opening. We have never had a problem with this protocol and don't expect to tonight. We are a city that works.

As I launched into this pedagogy, CM's did not always pay attention. Most often they were rustling papers and making notes to themselves in the margins of their agenda. I forgave them because they had heard it many, many times and were often anxious about the meeting ahead. Some of this ritual was passed down from former Council Presidents, but I set a new tone to the formality. I did so for a reason. I thought it was our responsibility to demonstrate an efficient and

fair governing body. If that meant putting on a show at every Council meeting that didn't reflect the chaos we were sometimes experiencing, I thought a frontstage performance was worth it and was responsive to the habitus of a governing efficiency the citizens preferred.

Goffman (1963, p. 231-235) said the structure of social gatherings that people accept are powerful rules for participation and are crucial for knowing what to do. I used the power of ritual at Council meetings to ensure that everybody in the room knew exactly what we were there to do. Local governments deal with very raw human problems – concealing guns, de-criminalizing marijuana, dangerous dogs, contaminated rivers; the list is long. It was incumbent on us to stay calm and make decisions. Meetings that looked quite sanguine were often one outburst away from chaos. In line with Clearwater's habitus of efficient governing, I felt a heavy-handed decision-making ritual was preferable to mass in-decision. After 60 years of Council/Manager government and nine years with a strict CP, citizens complied with this ritual. They accepted that there would be decision makers; and it would be us.

> Reflexive Statement: Gert deRoo (2018) said cities are more likely to survive if their "anchoring qualities" maintain an identity through any transition. As I saw it, the Arts Center was going to change us into something we didn't yet understand, so we best hang on to an anchor, like a solid public decision-making process. Of course, from Bourdieu's perspective, these anchors can also be considered a form of "symbolic violence"; the taming of attitudes and perspective that are not conducive to getting things done. Guilty.

Participants in my study affirmed Goffman's truth about social rules.

> Interviewer: What do you think is the purpose of government?
>
> A former council member replied:
>
> Well, guide is maybe the better word. I think we need somebody to take charge and show us how… we can accomplish something. I think it's a process that the majority of the people don't understand,

> and I think that our city government should at least provide some structure and some continuity for the things we need and want.

A retired city administrator said:

> And I think the relationship of local government and the community it serves is a much different relationship than the state and federal because it's so personal and it's so daily. It goes to things like the public meetings. People want to be able to talk, and if they know there are, kind of, rules and guidelines that make for better government and better relationships with people, we follow those rules.

It is false to think that Council meetings were entirely without disorder. More than once I had a police officer escort an unruly citizen out of the room or gaveled a speaker just before their hair set on fire. An angry man stormed the council dais once. He was body blocked by a staff member. Council also had bullet proof shields installed on the front of our desks. But most often, even very upset speakers went along with the meeting ritual: they addressed Council politely; they thanked us for the opportunity to speak; they left written copies of their statements; and when reminded their five minutes were up, they sat down.

The lack of criticism about this protocol during my tenure seemed to indicate that people appreciated orderly meetings and missed them when they were gone. Like one study participant said, who served in university government and was a keen observer of City Council.

> The problem is I think you've still got citizens who care and who saw a city that worked. They still want those things from their government. I think the fringe or the margin … that came in, said we need a radically different city government. We have to change everything, and we can do that by passing resolutions.

> So I think the [new] council, being a Robert's Rules of Order snob, is far too permissive, everything's all over the place, it wastes a lot of time and makes strange decisions that delay things because the work wasn't done ahead of time. I think that can be a process that offends people on both sides because; whatever I signed up for it involved you getting your work done and meeting the mark. And I think people can be offended by a council not operating

> that way any longer. But the radical perspective on advocacy and change doesn't value the system, authority, tone, or process … it's all outcome.

And this affirmation from a university administrator who participated in the Arts Center decision making process:

> I think [city council] was a culture of respect where everyone's opinion was welcomed. It was recognized that this is where people express their thoughts … Given the strong feelings on both sides, I felt the decorum of the conversations was very high. And I think it made it possible for some of the people who really didn't support the project to come along.

Act I, Scene III: The Meeting as Performance

After this long discussion about the dramaturgical setting, my analysis of the meeting as performance can begin. From a dramaturgical perspective the purpose of performance is to validate social position, giving status to the performer toward a desired outcome. In this scene the core team performs with confidence before the City Council toward an outcome of a favorable vote in support of the Arts Center.

Core Team Speaks

Once the meeting protocol was reviewed for the September 24 meeting, we got underway. There were four items on the agenda, but the first three were not connected to the project. After addressing those items, I announced the Arts Center project and called on PV to address the Council. Her presentation was polished and calmly presented, beginning with beautiful color renditions of the Arts Center's future look. As she continued to speak, this outline appeared on the monitor:

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITY
- a premiere performing arts center
- a living-learning community

a show case for the fine arts
a central and important downtown site
a community partnership

FULFILLING NEEDS AND DREAMS

Utilizes natural and human resources
Contributes to downtown rebirth
Cultivates and emerging cultural renaissance

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE IT POSSIBLE

PV's narrative landed the perfect performance to appeal to Clearwater's habitus – the things it thought normal and important; or from the perspective of complexity theorists – its ordering principles. The project would reinvigorate the worthy downtown the city longed for. The project was a community partnership that included working together with citizens. And the project elevated the arts, as both an intrinsic good and for economic gain.

Many study participants expressed this hope for a downtown worthy of a new arts scene:

> It will be a beacon for many different things – accessible to everyone through affordable tickets and lots of activity. We had strength in the arts but a weakness in art facilities. Now we have a great venue for art. People are showing up in droves. Holy cow, we got something really cool done.
>
> (former county board official)

> Art is back in the city, culture too. This is something young professionals want. A revitalized downtown will help keep them here.
>
> (economic development specialist)

> …on the surface downtown is just as a place to house the artistic output of the community and to facilitate artistic output in theater, music, art, and all those types of things. That's what it is on the surface. And the educational piece of it as well for the university and the community. But to me it's more of a centerpiece of our values and for lack of a better way of saying it, to do anything we want to do.
>
> (local business entrepreneur in the creative economy)

PV's argument also addressed the concerns Council had posed over the previous months – mitigating risk through shared agreements, respect for an old theatre, and an operating budget

under construction. PV's calm but intense passion for the project shown. It was her most valuable social capital and built more confidence in her leadership than attempting to make points that addressed every concern. Her performance also evoked the epitome of the kind of leadership Grint (2010 a.) said was necessary to address what he called "wicked problems" – problems without right or wrong solutions requiring a group investment. We see how PV problematized the city's inadequate arts venues, then suggested a good but perhaps imperfect solution while investing followers in the decision making.

Next, UL rose to speak. Her confidence and TV-anchor voice mesmerized the audience with a razor-sharp argument that said the lack of theatre space on campus must be met with a new arts education building off campus in the city. She reviewed survey data from over 100 citizens to prove the team was already invested in responding to citizens' desires and affirming their interest in a better arts facility. UL told of another year-long citizen engagement process that included citizens' vision for an arts center in the city's future. She displayed pictures of the city's old and tired facilities and said that the new Center would be shared, and not to worry because Clearwater had lots of experience working together and sharing things. By the time she finished, the room seemed ready to grab a shovel and start digging the foundation themselves.

These two presentations exemplify a Goffman frontstage team performance. Core team members complimenting each other's performance by creating a picture of a future reality that matched what they knew citizens wanted in their city center. While their immediate audience was the Council, they also knew that CM's respond to citizens, so their presentation was also meant to stir up the citizen audience, who would, in turn, put pressure on their CM to pass the resolution. And further, by addressing CM's specific concerns, the core team performed a show

of respect for their decision-making position and opened the stage for CM's to appear "leader like" before their constituents. The core team's performance was pitch perfect.

Then Citizens Speak

After these two presentations, CP invited the public to speak. The core team had also prepared for this by coaching willing supporters to rise and speak. Many took their turns at the podium to state their support, which I captured from the meeting minutes of September 24, 2012. One asked Council to take a "leap of faith" to "create a catalyst" in downtown. Another said, "if we kill this idea now it will be another generation before we do this again." A letter from the president of the downtown advocacy corporation was read into the record that said they were "prepared to champion" the project. Another letter from a state senator said the project would "transform [this part of the state] into a vibrant cultural destination". The Chamber of Commerce presented a resolution in support, calling it "a promising project". The university's student senate reminded City Council that it pledged $50,000 to the Arts Center (Student Senate resolution). The next day, the local newspaper wrote that the "development will reshape downtown" but asked, can the "city afford it?" The editor praised the people behind the plan for "thinking boldly about how to improve the city" (front page, September 23, 2012).

A few citizens, who were not coached by the core team, rose to speak in opposition. At this point an organized opposition had not yet materialized, but individual citizens voiced concerns. One hoped the city would not rush into a decision but was suspicious that "we may have already started a train we couldn't stop." Another told Council to "stop shoving this project at the taxpayer but said the city wouldn't listen anyway" (meeting minutes, September 24, 2012).

As was the Council's habit and ritual, regardless of who was speaking, we listened and took notes.

> Reflexive Statement: An effective performance strategy I and many other CM's used over the years was the important perception of attending to citizens' comments by looking sincere while they spoke and taking a few notes. Goffman (1959) references this look of sincerity in political drama. I found the taking notes strategy lent an air of sincerity that was appreciated, even though I was not always writing about the topic at hand, as my mind was at times a million miles away. In Goffman's words this "movement back and forth between cynicism and sincerity" lurks around the edges of all moral interaction (p.21). But I found the practice to be an ethically practical strategy when the greater good was remaining calm amid the slings and arrows of public drama.

Backstage Work

This frontstage performance did not quite match what was playing out backstage. There, the core team and city staff had been meeting every few weeks to hammer out the necessary agreements on land use, ownership, and funding for the Arts Center. Interviews I conducted with city staff hint at some of the tensions that were not part of a frontstage performance.

One high-level department director said:

> … [the loudest opponent to this project] is right. Most performing arts centers lose money and must be bailed out by local government. That is why [we] created separate foundations to house the backstop for failures. It is good when donors have skin in the game. If they don't, they'll fall back on government to save them. This is human nature; we should recognize that and avoid it. Arts centers are not a core value or a necessary function of local government… [Still] it's a good project because it creates civic pride.

Another department director chimed in:

> … I feel I have to cover my a** so that future bad outcomes are not attributable to my lack of thorough information giving. I make decisions without politics as a professional for the elected body… I did not want to violate my ethics in order to make something happen that [they] wanted … The project was well vetted and something the community wanted… and the City Council was willing to take risks for…

And another department director said:

> I wanted to tell him I am 100% behind this. Where else are we going to find $88 million to go into downtown Clearwater? … if you asked me how I felt about it, to me it was a slam dunk. It was just a matter of working it out, inking the bottom line, and waiting for the Council.

Goffman speaks about the dual reality of front and backstage performance, where "impression fostering" occurs (1959, p.113). We see how a duality played out in this scene, in the strategies the core team used to prepare themselves and coach project supporters for the frontstage performance that lauded the project's attributes, while simultaneously living a backstage reality that was full of tough negotiating with a cautious city staff. Goffman does not deride this divide but acknowledges it as a reality of human action.

The City Council Takes the Stage

The day after the public hearing the Council returned to Chambers in legislative session to debate the resolution. Legislative Sessions, by local norm, followed public hearings by one day and were the stage for official decision making. The public did not speak in legislative session unless asked a direct question. This frontstage decision-making performance usually inspired CM's to dress more formally for the serious work ahead, arriving early and often clutching a stack of papers with their prepared arguments as the cameras rolled. On this night, the Council's body language foretold the weight of the decision before them.

The resolution essentially affirmed the Council's support for the Arts Center and vowed to work hard on the details. Excerpts are presented here:

> A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS CENTER IN DOWNTOWN CLEARWATER …

WHEREAS the city and the University have a long and successful history of cooperation and collaboration that benefit the community and the university, and

WHEREAS the city has experience completing redevelopment projects in downtown that require a public/private partnership, and

WHEREAS the Arts Center project provides a unique and unprecedented opportunity to meet future needs of the community and the university, and

WHEREAS the proposed project combines the experience, skills, talent, and financial resources of public and private sectors on a project that could not be completed on their own, and …

NOW THEREFORE be it RESOLVED the City Council does express its support… and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED city support is subject to evidence of state funding, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED city support is subject to an approved financing plan for the local share of the capital costs and that the city expects a sustainable operating revenue stream, and that an appropriate governance structure will be established and approved. September 25, 2012

One sees in the wording of the resolution, another strong connection to Clearwater's values and dispositions – Bourdieu's habitus. Its language refers especially to the city's long history of working together as partners. And that the city is to be trusted because of its experience with other redevelopment projects. And that the city is efficient in combining talent to accomplish something that could not otherwise be accomplished alone. And that it values the future of downtown. It is important to note that it was common practice that city staff wrote the resolutions that came before Council. In this case, in terms of protecting the public good, the

many backstage meetings on the Arts Center project resulted in a resolution City staff thought Council would support. One could therefore conclude that from a dramaturgical perspective, backstage is not always "dirty work". Despite the painstakingly developed resolution language, as debate unfolded CM's made a few changes.

The Power of Calm Rhetoric

The resolution was number 15 on the agenda. Having dispensed with the previous items, the Arts Center was moved, and Council began pitching their points of view. This is a time of important frontstage work for elected officials. Here they show off rhetorical skills for their constituency and prove their sensitivity to public demands. But the real target of their rhetoric is always other CM's. Most often a majority vote is required to prevail and CM's work hard to win that majority for their point of view. Open Meetings law prohibits jockeying for votes before a public meeting. Though this may not have always been strictly adhered to, Clearwater took the law seriously and saved most convincing for the Council floor. As the reader has discovered, however, CM's offered clues to their stance on the project in the months leading up to this meeting. And by my calculations, a simple majority was in hand. Yet, sometimes a passionate speech could change minds, so this old politician learned it was best not to count the vote until the vote.

In dramaturgical terms, CM's speeches were a powerful presentation of the self as a leader. Sometimes speeches were long and wandered off point, but CM's gave each other a wide berth because we understood their importance to fellow elected officials. City Councils do not otherwise function as a Goffman like team, save this one instance.

As a way of analyzing many CM's arguments during the meeting, I captured this verbatim speech by one of them from a gavel-to-gavel recording:

> I really support this resolution and I thank the people for coming forward so I could hear their enthusiasm for the project. I think we should take a leap of faith here. This project is a catalyst for downtown revitalization. Many questions about this exciting downtown project were answered by the developers last night, but I will have more questions that need answers before I can finally vote in favor. Tonight I will vote yes on this resolution of support. Clearwater has redefined civic engagement. Now it is expected that that is how we make decisions.
>
> (YouTube, meeting of September 25, 2012)

From a dramaturgical perspective again, this short speech can be unpacked as a powerful frontstage performance. The words signal to fellow CM's that she supports the resolution, which helped them calculate the likelihood that the resolution would pass, or not. Again, Open Meetings law prohibits elected officials from private horse-trading over votes, so these signals served as essential bell weathers for the upcoming vote. From a Bourdieu perspective she signals her positive response to a habitus that expects to include citizens, intimating that she agrees and that she understands her representative role. She also signals that she agrees with citizens that a revitalized downtown is necessary. Meanwhile she evokes confidence from her constituents as a decision maker, she says she is a thinking leader who relies on detail and facts and has the fiscal interests of the city at heart.

In addition to speeches, CM's looked leader-like by issuing directives calling for further information on a variety of actions: verified parking study, sustainable building practices, coordinated public transportation, preservation of historically valuable materials, and preserving a 30-foot public space along the riverbank. They also offered two amendments. One added a condition on the status of the historic buildings on the site; the other sent the project to the Waterways Commission for approval prior to further Council action. The first passed; the second

failed. But both amendments were meant to highlight that City Council was responsible and responsive to its constituency. When discussion and debate ended several hours later, the Council voted. The resolution passed unanimously. I was relieved to win by a unanimous vote. Though I had confidence a simple majority would likely prevail, a unanimous vote created a more compelling narrative for future frontstage work. The core team, who had watched in silence at the back of the room, breathed a little easier having overcome one large hurdle.

Chapter Summary

This chapter conducted a dramaturgical analysis of one of the major tension points in the Arts Center approval process – the need for City Council support in a resolution. I constructed this Goffman-like analysis by setting a stage where a core team of actors used their credibility in a frontstage performance and a perfect script to connect the project to the habits and dispositions of the citizens. The team worked backstage too by feeding City Council good data and respecting their roles as elected leaders. They also met the city's habitus by connecting with citizens and working together with city staff over many project details. Their approach paid off when the resolution passed unanimously. But it could have gone otherwise, because like all complex social systems, predictable outcomes are seldom guaranteed. The chapter suggested that an effective strategy for countering this complexity was sticking to the city's ordering principles of a formal decision-making protocol. At every turn, this complex project was met by a Council who stayed calm and made decisions. In the next chapter the reader will see that even so, chaos lurked, as it always does.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Municipal Drama, Acts II and III: Symbolic Dueling Media and a Phronetic Road Show

> ... my antidote to the Black Swans is ... to avoid being a sucker; this attitude lends itself to a protocol of how to act – not how to think, but how to convert knowledge into action and figure out what knowledge is worth.
>
> Nassim Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, 2007

Introduction

This chapter continues a dramaturgical analysis, structured as three mini-dramas, about a city's leadership of its new Arts Center. Act I examined how a core team strategized a performance in front of the City Council to win early support for the project. Act II's performance is set during an unforeseen community tension over a referendum vote and introduces a new team of actors who use their technological and political savvy to overcome this challenge. Act III traces the strategies of leaders in multiple settings as they chase after funding they needed from the state legislature. Returning to the core team of actors, it examines how their phronetic local know-how (practical wisdom) bent the power of state government actors toward the project.

Key Concepts

As way of review, I briefly re-introduce several key concepts at work in this chapter. In Act II Goffman's dramaturgical framework is expanded to examine the importance of loyal teams who share the "sweet guilt of conspirators" (Goffman, 1963; LaMagdeleine, 2016) on both front and back stages. Bourdieu's (1989) concept of habitus continues as an analytic lens that examines how leaders used knowledge of the city's habits and values to their advantage, but in this setting to respond to an unexpected event. His concept of symbolic and social capital also

reappear in my analysis of how both were circulated among decision makers to gain a leadership advantage. Taleb (2007) adds to the analysis of black swans, as unpredictable events with enormous impact, to analyze how leaders navigated the unpredictable. Lastly, the analysis returns to utilize Grint's (2014) collaborative leadership approach to address "wicked problems" as those without a right or wrong solution. Act III relies heavily on Flyvbjerg's phronesis as the practical wisdom of local "know how" to examine how experienced leaders in this case understood how to move toward an intended outcome.

Overview

By this time in the story, September 2012, the Arts Center had won its first victory in the battle for City Council support. But as the last chapter revealed, that support attached several conditions to the expenditure of public money. Truth be told, even if the conditions were met, a public expenditure still faced a final decision by the City Council. The tensions that surround that final decision create the story line for this chapter.

Act II, Scene I: There Was a Fight, so we Went to Referendum

The dramatic tension in Act II plays out over a referendum question that asked voters to cast opposite votes in two dueling referenda about funding the Arts Center. Without the right outcome, the project was dead. The setting moves from the formal protocol of a City Council meeting to several casual but equally intense environments on social media platforms, in face-to-face campaigns on the university campus, and at voters' front doors. The frontstage performances were directed by a new team of tech-savvy Arts Center supporters, who used their resources (Bourdieu's intellectual capital) to mount a brilliant and successful effort.

Background

In October 2013 (a year after Council's resolution to support the Arts Center) a new resolution to pledge $5 million in a public expenditure for the Arts Center hit a City Council agenda. It was a forward-looking proposal that attached nine conditions. One required securing State funding, another demanded private philanthropy. While others established the parameters for an operating model and protections from a city bail out. The resolution was a year in the making, city staff and project partners meeting frequently to negotiate the details. This was a quiet time for City Council involvement, whose habitus was accustomed to the backstage work of staff negotiations prior to Council action. During this time, the Council was updated regularly, frequently sending questions to the project partners via senior staff. The Council understood fully that its next action would be a decision on public funding. Their questions in the interim reflected their anxiety over its amount and mechanism.

Finally, on October 23, 2013, the time for a decision arrived when a resolution pledging public funding was officially on the agenda. The self-imposed limits of this dissertation prevent a thorough discussion of the arguments CM's (Council Members) mounted on the night of the decision; it must suffice to report that the resolution passed on an 8-3 vote after a four-hour public hearing and several hour Council debate. Even so, some citizens felt steamrolled.

One citizen I interviewed made this observation about the marathon hearing and Council vote:

> Interviewer: Who do you think were the movers and shakers?
>
> Participant: My impression was there were select council members who felt very strongly that this project should go forward. I think there was enough momentum among the people who were positive that you got a snowball rolling down a hill and it's going to go if it gets that kind of momentum. I think that was active in this situation. The forces came together to make this happen. I think if I had been against it, I would have felt that they railroaded it through. There are probably people who still feel that way.

A Council Member who voted no said:

> I felt the project was rammed down people's throats - a pre-conceived idea that the public was invited to too late in the game. If the project was going to be financially viable, I felt it needed community buy in. But most of the community was left out … I felt most council members had already made up their minds to support the project. They would vote for anything that said Arts Center.

Forcing a Referendum

Although the public funding meeting was long and somewhat contentious, the core team was confident they had made every effort to ensure public input and feedback (one of them reported 65 public appearances) and were certain that sentiments like the above would blow over. But they were wrong, and were shocked when rumblings of a citizen-led effort surfaced demanding a referendum on spending public money. In the weeks leading up to a possible referendum the public began raising their voice on both sides.

For example, Clearwater's citizens spoke at public hearings:

> I favor a referendum, to get a pulse of how the taxpayers feel.
>
> I oppose a referendum, which will only delay this vital project.
>
> I believe there should be a binding referendum. This is the time for civic engagement. There are numbers of people who do not attend council meetings who will be greatly affected if their tax dollars are spent on this project – senior citizens, single women with a child and some who are handicapped.
>
> (three comments from the public record minutes)

They sent emails:

> For once, let the [Clearwater] public vote and decide on a project of this magnitude that affects all taxpayers versus taking away that opportunity because you personally want this to happen. (Citizen email to Council)

… If you didn't want this project to happen and it looked like it was going to happen anyway, would you be for a vote on it? Every one of my friends do not want this to happen or pay for it, as none of them would utilize what the final result has to offer, including me. In my opinion this is a complete waste of taxpayer dollars for a project that will not generate one dime of hard revenue for the city.

(Citizen email to Council)

They sent letters:

> … I read a letter to the editor this week that best expressed the need for a referendum. A person wrote saying he had two jobs, a family, and work. He did not have time to come to meetings. But he felt the only fair way to settle this matter was to turn it over to voters to decide.
>
> (Letter from citizen to Council)

> ... the building and construction trades council voted to support the Arts Center project. We contacted all our union members to ask them, if there is referendum, to vote yes…
>
> (Letter from trade union to Council)

> … the symphony orchestra will achieve the high level of success we know is possible in a new facility. If there is a referendum, we encourage symphony supporters to vote "yes" …
>
> (Letter from symphony president to Council)

From Bourdieu's (1989) perspective these citizens were circulating significant social capital in hopes of swaying the Council vote. The two letter writers who claimed to have insight that not everyone could make it to public meetings, hinted at the guilt leaders should feel for making decisions without them. Another asserted that not just she, but "all her friends" opposed the project – here claiming social capital as part of a larger crowd of voters who should not be ignored. Others used their social capital as members of special networks, like a trade union or a symphony orchestra, to signify a possible voting block that might be important in the next election. Elected officials grow accustomed to weighing the costs of ignoring, or acknowledging, the impact of social capital like this. From Flyvbjerg's analytical perspective, this becomes part

of the art of practicing phronetic leadership in which the whole of each circumstance is weighed against a leader's self-determined ethical responsibility, often including a desire to be re-elected.

Background on the Referendum Process

In Chapter Four, the reader learned that referenda were not a foreign idea to Clearwater's citizens or their leaders. For instance, six referenda alone were held over several decades on the question of changing the form of local government. It was not that city leaders were unaccustomed to them; it was that not all agreed on their effectiveness. From Grint's perspective, this classically "wicked problem" – referenda are not in themselves right or wrong – was buzzing with debate about their best use.

The CM's I interviewed offered varied insights on this point.

In this statement, one thought referenda were good for educating voters.

> I think referendums - win, lose, or draw - help educate the public. The important thing is that the public is aware of the issues. I think… we made more noise about the project. I think we may even have helped some fundraising. What you got to do to make a project successful is get strong public interest. Now whether it's good interest or bad interest, the more interest you have, the better chance you have to make the project successful.

Another thought they were useful.

> ... basically I felt that the majority Council felt that there's no way they're going to accept a binding referendum. So, it was never proposed. I'll be honest, I think that's a mistake that the council made … I think that if the council would've been confident in what this was going to do they would have put a referendum to the citizens, and I think it would've

> passed. But the council didn't initiate a referendum; it was initiated by a citizen group.

But others disagreed, like one CM who wrote a long letter that ended.

> …I am in total support of public debate on these issues, large or small. I know that every member of the City Council values the comments of every citizen willing to give them. But I completely disagree with people who think that the only way they can have a say in this project is through a referendum.

Another elected official not on the City Council had strong things to say.

> … referendums are a "chicken s**t, cover you're a**, way to govern." Political leaders are elected to make decisions and should have some integrity to make an informed policy decision, not hide behind a referendum.

The City Council had the statutory power and prerogative to order a referendum on the Arts Center, but it was unable to overcome an internal tension over whether it should do so, despite several public discussions over many weeks. Eventually, when the question of ordering a referendum came to a Council agenda, they voted against it. Even after one CM tried to head off a citizen referendum with the argument that City Council would create a less biased question. But the idea failed on a unanimous vote (Council minutes, November 12, 2013). Council's action set in motion a process known as a petition for direct legislation – or a citizen led referendum. A group of citizens collected the requisite number of signatures (5,000) to force a referendum on the April 2014 ballot, but the City Council retained the power to decide its final language.

Referendum language is the most important ingredient in preparing for the vote, which is why some CMs urged the Council to write the question in the first place. But because the Council voted against that action, its responsibility now was to capture the sentiment of the citizen's petition in the referendum language it approved. When the language question came to Council's agenda on January 24, 2014, CM's debated for three hours before deciding on the wording a majority could support. They finally did so on 7- 4 vote. The final question asked

whether arts related projects costing more than $1million in public expenditure shall require a referendum. Project supporters would vote NO.

At the same time, the County Board (city residents are also governed by county government, but not vice versa) voted to put a public funding resolution on the April ballot. Their question asked simply whether the county should spend $3.5 million to support the Arts Center. Project supporters would vote YES. Thus, it happened that voters who lived in the city limits (about two thirds of county residents) faced dueling referenda questions with two opposite votes, YES and NO, depending on one's stance on the project. The difficulty of negotiating these dueling questions requires further analysis and is the main topic of the remainder of Act II.

Act II, Scene II: A Tech Savvy Team Pulls off Dueling Referenda

As a starting point, I briefly discuss the challenge of mounting a campaign to convince voters to vote two opposite ways on the same topic. Imagine on voting day, standing in the voting booth, not only carefully reading two questions but discerning which way to vote on each depending on your support or opposition to Arts Center funding. For advocacy groups trying to convince voters on both sides, this meant their message had to be crystal clear, and repeated again and again well before and right up to election day. This hinged on the fact that voters cannot bring election materials into the voting booth but must rely on their memory to caste the vote they meant to cast. Usually this is not a problem but can be significant when a decision demands opposing votes.

A New Team of Actors.

From a complexity perspective, the referenda arrived on the scene like a black swan – unpredicted but with an extreme impact on the Arts Center. To emphasize a point, the wrong

referenda outcome would have stopped the project all together. But equally unpredicted, a new team of actors arose in response to the challenge when a young, tech-savvy group took charge of educating the public on how to vote - not the mechanics of voting, but how to vote for the project, not against it. I introduced the team earlier as the Tech Savvies (TS). They were led by two people, one a respected downtown business owner who enjoyed significant social capital as a creative downtown entrepreneur, the other a swaggering veteran of political organizing and development insight.

The downtown business owner talked about her business's decision to advocate for a particular referendum outcome.

> … on the referendum thing. [Our communication business] does not talk politics or endorse anything one direction or the other. When we first got involved in the [Arts Center] stuff, it was very much just a community grassroots effort, not a political thing. It just seemed like it was an artist thing.
>
> We were sure we should support the arts and push for it because that's what we've been for so long and all of our staff felt that was important. But then it became clear that switches were being flipped here. This is now a very political thing. It's going to involve referendums, double referendums and it's going involve city council votes, and county board votes and state votes and governor budgets and all of this became very political. We took a moment to pull our staff together and said, "Do we want to continue down this path? Is this okay?"
>
> We decided collectively, yeah, this is our fight to be heard even if it does get political. And that's the creation of Voices for Art (a pseudonym) and working with a lot of partners to do the branding and the marketing and the website and the TV commercials and radio commercials and graphic design and all that stuff. Those were all political acts because they were done through a political action committee we formed. It was this big organizational amorphous thing.

The "big amorphous" thing was held together by a TS team who boasted their own social and intellectual capital. They included local artists, world-famous music artists, and web designers who had built their local businesses from nothing. Another was an economic development

specialist who had perfected the knack for saying what had to be said in diplomatic language. And another, an up-and-coming university student leader with a golden tongue and looks to match. In Goffman's dramaturgical terms, like the core team I described earlier, this new team was a group of loyal and focused co-conspirators. They described themselves in their literature as a group "bound by their vision for an economically and culturally stronger [Clearwater]."

Again, from the perspective of complexity in social science, in the interview above, one already appreciates the example of a leader skillfully adapting her organization to an unpredictable situation (Wheatley, 1992; deRoo, 2018). She suggests that her business thought they were right to support the arts project to a point because they had always been about creativity – this is the ordering principle she clings to. At the same time, she gives her business permission to move into a political show-down about art - NOT something they have been about. She facilitates a conversation that leads the group to decide to plunge in. They could have stuck with just art advocacy but decided to adapt to a political challenge by stretching themselves to do something new, but not so new that they lost sight of their ordering principles.

Their Stage

Using a dramaturgical lens, the TS team built a stage for pulling the referenda in favor of the Arts Center by spreading out across the city with fact-to-face and social media performances that relied on the team's expertise in digital communication and political organizing. I interviewed the TS leader who brought the most political experience, asking about her plan.

Interviewer: What was your team's plan of action?

Participant: Well, the first thing we did is we shook people down to pull together some

money. I remember being in the conference room with N. and shaking down JV to cut a check; not cut a check later but, "Get your damn checkbook out of your fanny-pack there, buddy, and cut the check now" kind of a thing. Same with Z., same with a variety of other folks we knew were very interested in this project and were very supportive
of it.

> We were able to amass some dollars, not to pay somebody, but to pay for the infrastructure that we needed to run an adequate campaign.
> Running an adequate campaign involved communicating a concise message.
> We worked hard on putting together the messaging. At that point it was me and two others and folks at the University who had an interest in seeing this through and wanted to make sure that their participation in this was messaged appropriately. I think we put together a very strong and compelling message and then we told a story. We told that story through web, through media, through advertising, through signage, through coordinated public communications, and through leaflet dropping - basically how you would run a traditional campaign with lots of coaching of the volunteers.

From a Bourdieu perspective this interview underscores how effectively the TS team circulated its symbolic capital. Not only had they mastered the language of political organizing and digital communication through their professional expertise, but they also cajoled money from donors by spending their social capital. In this tight-knit group, one also sees Goffman's (1959) "performance team" working on an integrated impression by keeping the team in the fold. Like Goffman (1963, p.198-201) who pushed this insight further with a notion of "tightness and looseness" in which participants are expected to show "devotion to the spirit of the occasion" with little room for "unoriented activities" , this leader illustrated that she understood the importance of a precise message and tight devotion

Their Script

The Tech Savvy's (TS) script also connected with Clearwater's values that the reader learned about in Chapter Four – a downtown worthy of growing the creative arts scene and citizen involvement in local politics. They launched their message on a hip social media platform

with a page called “Speaking for Growth” (a pseudonym). In these messages from their site, one sees a clear connection to the city’s values.

> **Let's Get $erious. Let's Build Our Future.**
>
> **The critical April 1 vote is fast approaching.**
> **Learn more below about how you can help shape [Clearwater's] future...**
>
> **Things are heating up big time in the pro-Arts Center movement and referendum action committee Voices for Art. Today we're excited to tell you about launch of our web page which has information on voting, volunteering, donating, upcoming events, and more. It will be a digital hub for the campaign over the next several weeks so check in often!**
> **Be aware of this critical time in [Clearwater]. It's important to help spread the word!**
>
> February 24, 2014

Their page stayed active up to the April election. The final post read:

> **The Final Push: find voting locations, help your friends and volunteer for our future.**
>
> **The only way the Arts Center can go forward at all is if both referendums go the right way. Vote YES on the County. Vote NO on the City. There will never be another chance to vote on this project. We could permanently lose a major opportunity here.**
>
> **Leaders in [the state capital] need to see direct support from citizens. Without doing our local part, we'll see zero investment in our community.**
>
> **Make sure everyone you know understands. Then vote YES on the County's positive investment, and vote NO on the City's negative and forced referendum mandate**
>
> March 28, 2014

The TS team engaged in other scripted tactics as well. One, in a more traditional vein, mailed over 10,000 postcards to registered voters in the city. An opposition group mailed

postcards also, but the contrasting tone and lack of energy from the two groups is undeniable, as seen in these two examples.

The TS team also targeted student voters on the university campus with a specialized script for that audience. Marshalling significant political campaign experience, they created a three-phased GOTV (get out the vote) plan. Their goal was to get 1500 student voters to show up at the polls. Their tactics included weekly messaging on a Facebook page, placing 130 pro-Art Center posters around campus, speaking at dormitory council meetings, hosting a music rally with local performers, and operating a phone bank. All the fixings of a legitimate political campaign. The campaign messaging on their mailings read:

GIVE THE PERFORMING ARTS A VENUE THEY DESERVE: STATE OF THE ART THEATRES, NEW CLASSROOMS, ROOM FOR THE ARTS TO FOURISH!

******

ONE PROJECT, TWO VOTES, OUR FUTURE

******

SUPPORT COMMUNITY COLLABORATION. SUPPORT THE ARTS CENTER

WHAT THE ARTS CENTER MEANS TO YOU: BEAUTIFUL LOCATION, APARTMENT STYLE LIVING/LEARNING CENTER, EASY WALK TO CAMPUS

I interviewed the student leader of the campus effort, who shared insights about why they focused their message the way they did.

> … in the 2016 presidential election generation Z came of age and politics was more than ever about morality. When something is contentions and moral, people instantaneously have a positive or negative reaction… In the moral political climate of 2018 … moral rhetoric pitted people against each other… for Gen Z there is no using the system to make change …They think you tear things down and build something new. It is their time to figure out who's on what side.

From a dramaturgical perspective, this student leader knew her audience and designed a messaging campaign that appealed to them. "A performing arts venue you deserve" is a moral argument. "Community collaboration" is a moral argument. "What this project means to you" is a direct appeal that brilliantly captured student's moral pre-occupation. After weeks of executing their multi-layered campus campaign, the effort paid off. The results of the April election showed that the voting ward with the highest student population in the city supported the Arts Center 661 to 188 (official results, City Clerk office).

The Opposition Group

The referenda also sparked a more focused opposition effort. Until now the opposition group (OG) was a loosely organized effort that focused on the fear of rising taxes and the likelihood of a failed Arts Center. But the referenda re-focused the OG group on a new opposition to not spending public money on anything arts related. They also created a Facebook presence by launching a page called "Voters with Information" (a pseudonym). The page's primary function was notifying people about upcoming Council actions. Like the TS team, they also sent postcard mailings to registered voters. Across these platforms, the message tried to convince voters to oppose public funding. (See also, image of postcard above.)

NO COUNTY - WE WON'T PAY!

YES CITY - WE WANT A SAY!

Property Taxes Will Increase!

County & City Debt Will Increase!

Theaters Lose Money!

Endangers Community Arts!

One is instantly aware of the lower "wow factor" in this group's message – words like "debt", "lose money", "endanger", and "taxes" did not inspire voters to stretch their imagination and dream of a different future. From a Bourdieu analytical frame, they lacked the symbolic capital to create inspiration or vision, but instead counted on a more recognizable fiscally conservative message of "no new taxes".

The leader of this strengthened opposition group agreed to be interviewed for this study. I learned that her main personal complaint was not being listened to at City Council meetings, but

reported that she spoke anyway to "record her point of view for history". She was brave to do so, as speaking at Council meetings was challenging in itself, let alone as a member of an overwhelmed opposition. But she also reported that being part of the opposition group made her feel she would have a bigger impact, even though she openly reflected on the group's deficiencies.

> Interviewer: Can you describe the opposition group?
>
> Participant: We were a group with little political experience who shared a point of view about the project. We knew our thoughts would have little impact on the outcome because the decision had already been made. "Voters with Information" was too late and too small to make a difference. But I enjoyed working with them.

In terms of Bourdieu's social capital, this opposition leader admits a lack of it and as a result feeling defeated from the start. Nonetheless, she found the good company of a like-minded team as invigorating as the TS team. This is yet another affirmation of Goffman's dramaturgical premise about the important role of teams in social drama.

> Reflexive Statement: I interpreted reflections like this one from brave people who spoke from the podium as a vindication of my approach to meeting protocol. It took courage to stand alone facing the City Council with your backside to the rest of the room. I tried to soften that difficulty with a respectful tone. I also urged City Hall to move the podium many times over my tenure, but to no avail. Bourdieu's symbolic violence has a physical language too. I felt the podium's language told people to stay safely in their chairs.

Act II, Scene III: Dramaturgy Goes Face-To-Face

The Tech Savvy team performed on yet another stage in a door-to-door campaign. Door-to-door is an old campaign technique, usually organized by neighborhoods, in which volunteers cover an assigned geography with a walking list, sometimes of likely voters, sometimes in what's called "blind" literature drops – just going up and down the street. Volunteers approach a

front door, knock, and speak to the person who answers with a prepared script. It works best if the volunteers head out with more than a modicum of enthusiasm, but many need coaching to make their pitch believable. One of the volunteers I interviewed described how she geared up to go door-to-door.

> So that was probably the opening of me knocking on doors. When the vote came back at the state level that they were not going to fund it at the levels that we had expected, that was when I really saw that I needed to do more to make this happen. Kind of on a personal note, I remembered driving to [River City] (a pseudonym) to see Sesame Street live with my child ... and I remember thinking at 11:30 at night, I don't ever want to drive there to see Big Bird again.
>
> … it was overwhelmingly positive. There were people against it but they couldn't verbalize why. I think that kind of said everything … They just repeated the words tax dollars but didn't have any knowledge of what it might look like or the partnerships that were being formed.
>
> It was really just a marketing/public relations situation where the better we could articulate exactly how the money was being used and what percentage would come from public funds and what percentage was private funds - that partnership element, people seemed to understand it more. I think there's a certain demographic of not just [Clearwater] but the larger, wider world that any time there's any kind of publicly funded anything there's going to be opposition.

People with a personal motivation like this person exude sincerity. Goffman described a sincere performer as one who "believes in the impression fostered by their own performance" (1959, p. 19-23). Sincerity of self and sincerity of purpose is a valuable combination when trying to reach an audience. When only one was present, for example, organizers of the volunteers in a campaign like this one must screen and prep volunteers, since the script had to be exactly right. It is hard work.

> Reflexive statement: During my many campaigns I found that most citizens valued the face-to-face interaction of a door-to-door campaign. It didn't seem to matter if the conversation was substantive. It was more an appreciation that the candidate physically came to their door. I remain puzzled by the value of this

> intimate interaction straddling a public and private space at the front door. It seems to violate Keith Grint's proposition that separateness is necessary to leadership (2010). Perhaps Goffman's micro-performance in social interactions could shed light on the value of this political performance, but I was never able to quantify its place among other campaign strategies. Nonetheless, it remains a mainstay of political persuasion work. As it was in this campaign.

In all, the TS team mounted a highly effective face-to-face campaign. They spread volunteers into every voting ward in the city, knocking doors on weekends and weeknights from February to the April election. Although they did not count the number of doors, 2,500 pieces of literature were gone when the campaign ended.

Dramaturgy's premise is that human beings are symbol-using animals, whose symbolic environment is always being constructed (Goffman, 1973; Borreca, 1993, p.58). We saw here the role of symbolism in the strategic interpretation of an environment. The TS team's seminal message was symbolic of a constructed and desirable future Clearwater. The name of their campaign "Speaking for Growth" symbolized that they were speaking for a future that was alive and changing. Their social media presence symbolized a hip and sophisticated communicator. Their campus campaign delivered a moral message symbolic of that audience's interpretation of reality. And their door-to-door campaign symbolized a human-scale effort in the facework of social interaction. Taken together, these strategies presented a powerful drama symbolizing the good that could come to the city in a new Arts Center.

Closing Act II

Referenda are not benign performances; they are orchestrated frontstage political performances aimed at a specific outcome. They may arrive on the political scene like a black swan - unexpected and unpredicted – but with savvy leadership, their outcome can be bent to one's advantage, as it was here. As such, the referenda did not push the Arts Center off track.

Just the opposite. The result was a victory for supporters. The city voted NO to roadblocking arts funding – 60% to 40%. The County voted YES to funding the Arts Center – 54% to 46% ([Clearwater] County Official Results 4-09-14). The results rewrote the script for project supporters, who now had proof that Clearwater wanted an Arts Center and was willing to put up public money to help pay for it. This new narrative became a powerful part of a sophisticated script for the final act of this municipal drama.

Act III: A Phronetic Roadshow

Key Concepts

In addition to the analytic concepts used previously, the final mini drama shines a light on Flyvbjerg's conceptual emphasis on practical wisdom – or phronesis – as the know-how of local leadership practice. Called by others, a bricolage, or "muddling through" (Scott, 2020) this kind of leadership is well suited to those with an acquired intelligence of local experience. Which we will see, was especially useful when confronting power's rationality, as Flyvbjerg said must be done.

Introduction to Act III

The Arts Center project is now three years into its approval process, yet not one grain of sand has been disturbed on the site. But progress has been made on other fronts. Since its public announcement in 2012, the project had won local support in two City Council resolutions, in 2012 and 2013; the latter pledged a public expenditure of $5 million. And in 2014, two local referenda decisively affirmed the public's appetite for local public funding. But the local pledge, that now totaled $8.5 million, was still not enough. By this time, the Arts Center's estimated construction cost had risen to $60 million. Most mid-sized cities cannot spend that amount of

money on a single project, nor do they have the political appetite for it. Clearwater's total annual capital improvement budget in 2017 was less than $60 million.

Using a dramaturgical framework, Act III returns to analyze the core team's strategies for appealing to the state legislature and the governor to help fund the Arts Center. The reader might recall that the local resolution, passed in 2013, required state revenue as part of the funding formula. Landing that funding was going to be an arduous task because power relationships between state and local government are always a factor - local government being the less powerful player. As a result, local actors must carefully strategize even when not asking for something out of the ordinary like funding an Arts Center.

Briefly put, the state's budget process in each biennium begins with the Governor's Executive Budget, which is reviewed and amended by the state legislature before ultimately approved in a formal action. The legislature's approval process starts in a committee that dissects the Governor's budget and presents its recommendations to the legislature, who then debate and make changes to what becomes the final budget. As an important aside, though the state legislature has the power to approve the budget, the governor retains limited executive power to fund projects outside this process.

For the core team, these budget realities meant that they must make three different appeals – to the budget committee, the state legislature, and the Governor. Each appeal required a different strategy, the details of which create the storyline for Act III. Since many strategies meant traveling across the state, the setting moves from Clearwater to the state capital – and sometimes on a bus in between.

Act III, Scene 1: A Nod from the University System

The importance of the state's funding cannot be overstated. If the state would not help fund it, the project was dead. The target was a $25 million ask in the budget scheduled for approval in the spring of 2015. Leading up to that decision, the core team's first appeal began with the University's governing board called the Board of Regents (BOR) who were responsible for submitting university system requests to the Governor's Executive budget. As a reminder, since the university was a partner in the Art Center project, it both justified and required a path through the university's requests in the state budget. Local campuses routinely began this long and winding road of budget requests with a committee of the BOR called the Capital Planning and Budget Committee. The Arts Center's ask would also begin here.

Fortunately, the core team included the seasoned university administrator (UL) already introduced in Chapter Six who brought considerable political capital to this task. Not only did she understand the intricacies of the university system, but she had political capital in the system from 20 years of building excellent university relations skills. I spoke about her presentation skills previously – a whiskey smooth voice mixed in perfect proportion with spot-on data usually melted all but the coldest hearts.

Backstage work

She did not disappoint this time either. As the core team began to plan its first strategy UL learned, through a backstage connection, that the Vice President for University System Capital Planning (VP) would soon pay a visit to Clearwater. She sent the VP an invitation to tour the site of the proposed new project. She was confident the VP would be interested because of her prior support for public-private partnerships in the university system.

UL recalled the VP's visit during our interview.

> I took her down there and I said, "I want to show you something and I want to describe something to you that we've been talking to a private developer about. As you know, our master plan says that the university would be interested in working with the community to develop a shared arts center.
>
> I showed her the [old community] theater and talked about the condition. I showed her the campus theatre. And then I walked her down to the site. I said, "Here's what we envision … a shared arts center right here at the confluence of the two rivers." She looked at the site and said, "We have to find a way to make this work because this is just too good a piece of property to have it turn into something other than a project that could benefit the university and community and transform your downtown."

This short recollection demonstrates backstage work bursting with Flyvbjerg's phronesis – the know-how of local knowledge. For example, UL understood the value of a dramatic impression left by physically being on a site. And, knowing the VP was open to partnerships, she used words like "shared space" and "envisioning this project together". She also referenced the campus master plan to prove that the project had credibility. All of which culminated in the know-how of a keen local knowledge. As it turned out, the VP supported the Arts Center project from that point forward.

But the core team were not the only actors performing backstage work. The opposition was working to influence the BOR (Board of Regents) also, but in the opposite direction. As more energy poured into the project more opposition mounted, despite the referenda outcome. A small opposition group (OG) led primarily by an influential business owner whose family-run business commanded national and local attention, mounted the first organized opposition to state funding. OG's family business claimed significant social capital in the city from its tremendous support for local community needs over the years, for example a public library and science

programs at the university. A science building on campus even bore the family name. But the Arts Center project was not going to be one of them. In a letter to the BOR she outlined why:

> I am writing this letter as a concerned citizen and a long-time supporter of the university in [Clearwater]. The [Arts Center] project has caused considerable harm to the community and the university because of a hope and wait approach … that has destroyed historic properties and stopped renovation of historic theatres, waiting and hoping something new will happen. Please get on with it.
> … I hope the BOR will deny the request to fund the Center, because four of your five guiding principles will not have been met by your August decision time…
> (Email to BOR Regent J. Brown (a pseudonym) June 2014)
>
> NOTE: I was not able to find documentation of the five guiding principles at the time of this writing.

In this letter, we see that the leader of the OG practiced phronetic leadership as well. She knew well that the Board of Regents had a somber responsibility to meet the standards of system-wide accountability. Her letter challenged their decision-making responsibility by including the guiding principles the Board aimed to serve. A high stakes reality they likely would not ignore. Her letter keenly addressed that reality.

Act III, Scene II: A Performance to WOW the Budget Committee

Not long after the VP's visit, the University's Capital Planning and Budget Committee was scheduled to meet in a city close to Clearwater. The core team staged its first frontstage performance before the committee with the goal of convincing them to include the project in the university's capital budget request. The team prepared a large packet of background information, which UL would refer to during her presentation while the rest of team would be ready for questions. Again, because she knew her audience well, UL's presentation perfectly matched University System values – stability, collaboration, academic priorities, and a little innovation:

> … the 2011 campus master plan … provided a sound foundation for decisions about new construction projects … and at least three opportunities for collaboration with the community. The campus' highest academic facility priority is improving fine and performing arts… [Our local campus] has sought a solution to meet the academic needs for the arts since 2009 … but other needs took higher priority… But through this unique and innovative partnership with the community, we can solve facility shortcomings with a larger and higher-quality facility than either could afford alone…
>
> (Presentation on the budget request submitted for BOR action, October 2013)

The meeting took place in a small room on a local college campus near Clearwater. Before the meeting began the core team and other supporters took their seats, filling two full rows in the small room. As UL began, each core team member was introduced by title, including the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce, City Council President, County Board Chair, and Foundation Director. We sat in tense silence while UL made a plea for BOR support. Discussion followed, after which I was asked if there was strength behind the Council's resolution of support that passed in 2012, which was included in the committee's packet. I rose to report that it passed unanimously, and that Clearwater had experience sharing things with the university and that the city enjoyed having them as our neighbor. A bit of good fortune bolstered the core team's confidence because two of the BOR members lived in Clearwater and were alumni of its university. PV (prime visionary) had prepped the two prior to this meeting and was grateful when one of them spoke in favor. After a few more questions and debate, the committee unanimously approved the concept for the development of a shared Arts Center. This meant the project could move forward to the entire BOR.

From a dramaturgical perspective, this short scene demonstrates the effectiveness of a well-strategized front stage performance. Not only did the team understand that being present with a large contingency would be a visual symbol of community support, but that staging themselves as respectful participants by sitting quietly in spectator seats would pay homage to

the committee's position of power. We knew we were putting on our best show to get something from them; they knew it too. Backstage work was also obvious in the connections PV made with the two local BOR members, resulting in their vocal support. Bourdieu's concept of spending political capital was also at play in the team from Clearwater that included important leaders with titles who could speak with authority because of them. The scene, taken as a whole, displayed Flyvbjerg's phronetic leadership in action in the team's practical knowledge of the setting and their audience. They knew that filling a tiny room with titled leaders would impress. They knew that detailed supporting materials would put off concerns about this unique project. And they had a boots-on-the-ground sense of how the project fit Clearwater's proven habits of sharing with the university.

Act III, Scene III: A Nod from the Governor

The next step in seeking state funding was convincing the Governor to include the project in her Executive budget. Flyvbjerg's practical wisdom is again on display in the core team who exercised their keen sense of political dramaturgy.

Backstage Phronesis

There are many ways to garner the good will of a public official in a higher office than yours. Passive strategies like passing local ordinances that complement a Governor's agenda are one way. Clearwater did this, for example, when the city rescinded its local minimum wage ordinance in the wake of a statewide prohibition. Other strategies used local legislators who shared the Governor's party and political view as conduits for important conversations. Clearwater had good working relationships with its state legislators, so it often used this strategy. Another strategy is having the chief elected official at the local level – the Council President –

appeal to the chief elected official at a higher level – the Governor - in an attempt at a mano a mano, off the record connection, or in Goffman's terms, an off-stage performance. This latter tactic became one of the strategies used to win the Governor's nod when I wrote her a letter, one leader to another.

The core team's goal was to convince the Governor to include the project in her Executive budget. Her inclusion did not guarantee funding, but her nod was the gatekeeper to any possible funding. The governor was running for re-election that November, with an eye on a presidential bid in 2016. A popular politically conservative Governor, she was likely to win re-election because her party held majorities in both legislative houses and she had already won re-election once. She did not carry Clearwater in the last election because gerrymandering after the 2010 US Census had relegated the city to one political party (not hers) and she would likely not need Clearwater for re-election to state office, but the calculus for a national bid was an unknown. In 2014 she was already building a national platform and her fiscally conservative constituency would surely note her support for a shared project that saved money and helped grow tourism for the state. But the wording of her campaign pitch had to be perfect.

In January 2014 I wrote the letter to the Governor. My strategy was to hit just the right tone for supporting our project in light of her possible national campaign. The letter said in part:

> Early in 2012 a unique project was proposed in Clearwater … that would share a performing Arts Center between the university and the city … the city council has already pledged $5 million to the project, with contingencies. But our investment depends on … the State's investment. We can't proceed without your nod…
>
> … I understand that new things must be carefully weighed. To my knowledge the State has never shared a university building with a city. But, I assure you, Clearwater is a very sound place to try such an agreement. We have been sharing public buildings for over 40 years. Our City/County Health Department is not only housed in the same space but shares duties as well. Our County Sheriff and City Police have shared space at the Government Center

> for over 20 years. Their arrangement is tried and true. We also have 10 years' experience with a regional EMS agreement … and we share a city owned ice center and football fields with the University. All these complicated shared agreements have been hammered out by local people willing to find the best way to serve all parties.
>
> Clearwater is in desperate need of a better performing arts building. The University is in desperate need of better instructional and performing arts space. Downtown is in desperate need of capital investment to support redevelopment and increase the tax base and its tourism draw. There could be no more perfect time to build this Center together - sharing it with students while saving the state money. That seems like a win-win for us, for you, and the state…

The letter was sent on my official letterhead with the proper salutations.

> Reflexive Statement: I found that a pragmatic approach to political leadership was the most effective strategy for getting things done. A pure doctrine of the ends-justify-the-means isn't moral, of course. But writing a letter that may not entirely reflect one's values is more useful than not writing one because ideologies got in the way of an Arts Center your city desperately needed. This is the practical art of political leadership.

I was never sure the Governor read the letter, but I suspected that she did because she mentioned the points I made in later public statements. By this time in my political career, I had developed a phronetic "feel for the game" of political leadership and knew exactly how politicians with less political capital, like city council presidents, write to politicians with more political capital, like Governors. They do so with arguments that appeal to their political reality. With a re-election looming large and a possible first bid for a national office, the Governor was likely weighing every move, even those outside her customary fiscal conservatism in support of arts related projects. This Governor did not carry Clearwater in the last gubernatorial election, but support for a pivotal local project in a densely populated urban center may make a change this time around. This, from a Bourdieu perspective, increased my political capital. But, from a phronesis perspective, I also understood that the practical reality of the project's uniqueness could not be played too heavily in a state legislature the Governor's party controlled and where a

fiscal conservatism held the majority. In other words, the legislature may not approve a project whose success was unclear, even if the Governor shared their political majority. This reality decreased my political capital.

The reader is here again reminded of the complexity of the Arts Center project. Though the limits of this dissertation make it impossible to capture its complexity entirely, a core team member I interviewed summed it up like this.

> There's this cartoon in the New Yorker; a guy is doing this big, long equation. As he's explaining the equation, he points to an area in the middle and says, "that's where the miracle happens".
> It was kinda like that.

Scholars of complexity explicitly elevate the role of luck in any complex undertaking (Taleb, 2007; Grint, 2005) – being in the right place at the right time. While one cannot deny that luck was a factor in this project, which must include the assembly of a core team who happened to be in leadership positions when the project appeared. However, it was not luck alone that produced this Arts Center, but equal parts painstaking phronetic leadership, as I demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter.

Later in 2014, the Governor traveled to Clearwater to address an economic development summit. She was far down the campaign trail by now. In her first ever public statement about the Arts Center project, she stated her explicit support for what she called a public/private investment and hinted of another funding route should the budget scheme fail. I was not able to interview the governor for this case study, but a newspaper article covered her visit: … "The Governor sent the strongest signal yet that her administration intended to help with the project." 'What I like about this particular project in Clearwater is that it's leveraging public and private dollars. One way or another; we're going to find a way to get this done' (local newspaper, front

page, 6/24/2014). The Governor's nod was a relief and a small victory for the core team. She signaled that she was willing to burn some political capital in her own party to help our project. Clearwater would owe her something in return, perhaps our support in a presidential bid, should it come to that.

Act III, Scene IV: The Full Monty at the Statehouse

From a dramaturgical point of view, the core team's next strategy demanded a frontstage performance before the full state legislature – an effort that would require the Full Monty because opposition was already evident. In 2013, the local newspaper reported that the chair of the Assembly Colleges and University committee called the Arts Center a "potential white elephant" (newspaper online post, February 19, 2013). She was quoted: "There is no reason to believe that the project is a high-level priority deserving of state funds… it simply makes no financial sense at a time when many families are still struggling to pay their bills". The core team heard this fiscal-values argument many times. It was difficult to counter since no one wanted families to suffer. Our response, however, was that the project would lift all boats, an argument that was backed up by projections of a rising standard of living for most people in the city, if not all. We had local data to prove it. An economic/urban systems geography professor analyzed Clearwater's expected economic gain from the project using an Urban Economic Multiplier forecast. She claimed that the creative economy bubbling up would create brain-based jobs (science and technology types, e.g., software designers) which in turn would spin off basic jobs (nurses, carpenters, teachers, taxi-drivers). The local multiplier predicted a 1:5 ratio – with one brain-based job creating five basic jobs and adding another 1.7 brain-based jobs over five years. (*Economic Impact of the* [*Arts Center],* 2014). But this sentiment was not necessarily shared by the state legislature.

The Core Team Calls in Reinforcements

Three years into the approval drama, the small core team remained the driving force behind the project. But, for this next big push the team decided it needed a strong local partner to build its final appeal. The team saw Clearwater's Chamber of Commerce as that partner. From Flyvbjerg's phronetic leadership perspective, it was a good choice because the Chamber's mission aligned with the fiscally conservative majority in the state capital. In the words of the Executive Director: "The mission of the chamber is to create a community in which business can survive. We are a pro-business advocacy organization with a goal to create a positive business environment so all businesses can be successful" (interview transcript). This narrative fit the project narrative well because the core team had already established that the Arts Center was an economic development project that would increase business and create jobs.

But first, the core team must appeal to the local Chamber to join the effort. Needing a convincing emissary, it sent the Chancellor of the University in Clearwater with the urgent message "We need you to push this project!" The Chancellor's political capital was strong because the university was a member of the Chamber and the two organizations worked together on student internships and other initiatives. This was not the first, or only time, the Chancellor had acknowledged the Chamber's positive impact on the university or sought its partnership. I interviewed the Chamber's director of public affairs, who described their response to the Chancellor's appeal: We welcomed the chancellor's message. [We heard her say] "This is important to the community. We think we have a good project but it's on a bubble right now; there's a lot of opposition".

The public affairs director went on to say:

> … the Chamber is concerned about the taxes businesses pay because it is a business cost for them. So, we want to make sure taxes are well used… we felt [Clearwater] had been responsible with taxes… [and] the people proposing the project had credibility – city leaders, bank leaders, university leaders, developers … they're people that are trustworthy and people of their word and heart. They're not flashy or hard to live with people, who always want their way…
>
> Our board listened, looked at the numbers and decided we were going to do what we could to move it forward…"
>
> (interview with Chamber director of public affairs)

From Bourdieu's (1989) perspective this passage reveals how political capital functions as an asset that can be circulated through cultural and social networks. The Chancellor had already built a relationship with the Chamber, which was now paying dividends. Other city and financial leaders also owned a trustworthiness that bought them the Chamber's confidence, even though the Arts Center project was a unique ask. More recent scholars like Kjaer (2013) suggest that this kind of capital is earned over time and though it does not have a monetary value, it is an investment with non-monetary paybacks. Clearly, political capital was being spent here.

The Chamber was fully aware of the work ahead of them when they took on a leadership role. I interviewed the Executive Director, who showed a phronetic sense of this reality.

> I remember sitting at a chamber board meeting. I'm looking at the project going oh my God, this is going to be like taking a bulldozer to move Mt. Everest. We're sitting in a board meeting, the board's having a discussion. They said, "We really got to get behind this thing." And I'm sitting there going, the amount of work that's going to take. [Another member] said "You know. We've got to put our money where our mouth is. Let's spend up to $20,000; let's pull a group together and build a plan to sell this."
>
> I'm sure I turned white. When I went home that night, I told my spouse "Don't plan on doing anything, because my life just got turned upside down." When we met a day or two later everybody was so excited. I thought okay, I got to get excited. And I did. And we started the wheels turning with a group of 20 of us, and the more you talked, the more you got going, the more you got excited. And then the fact sheets start going out, S.R. did a great job putting all those things

together and the momentum just started rolling …

(Interview with Chamber Director)

A Traveling Show

In the winter of 2015, the Chamber lived up to its promise when it made the Arts Center the primary focus of its annual Rally to the state capital. The annual Rally was the brainchild of the Chamber's executive director and had grown into a sophisticated production over time that boasted a phronetic-type know how. For over a decade, a delegation of Clearwater citizens worked the state capital for one entire day in a Goffman-like performance of local "civic boosterism" that was meant to leave an impression with state legislators about the vitality of Clearwater - a city far to the west of the capital and even farther from the Legislators' minds. This year over 140 people loaded a bus early on a dark and frigid January morning to make the three-hour journey to the State capitol. Along the way, the group was briefed on a message that appealed to the fiscal conservatives in the legislature's majority:

- The project is not a local partisan issue – local legislators from both parties support it
- The project revitalizes downtown as an economic development strategy that will grow business and jobs
- The project is essentially about educating promising young people in our state who will be leaders of tomorrow's jobs

(Rally materials)

Once the Clearwater contingency arrived at the state capital, the group congregated in a glass-walled conference room on the top floor of a hotel directly across from the capitol building. The sun was up by now and the aroma of fresh coffee filled the air as the briefing for the day began. Like a locker room pep talk, speakers rallied the group with their message of victory for the project. Then, like a carefully choreographed playbook, small cohesive groups were matched in face-to-face appointments with legislators for the day. When the briefing wrapped up, little bands of excited and anxious "Clearwaterians" streamed out of the hotel and flooded the inside

of the state capital. As the day wore on, groups passed each other in the hallway to exchange experiences and bolster one another's spirits. To add to the Goffman-like drama, all 140 of us wore matching winter scarves wrapped around our necks so legislators would not easily forget Clearwater.

Backstage Strategies

From a dramaturgical perspective, the purpose of the Rally was a frontstage performance aimed at convincing legislators to approve funding. But there was backstage work playing out also. The Chamber solicited organizations in Clearwater to send letters to the JFC (Joint Finance Committee). Many did so, including the City Manager, university administration, a citizen group who had a vision for Clearwater's future, the student body president, and Clearwater's six state legislators. The Chamber also hosted regular discussions with the core team in Clearwater to hone the hometown strategies. And local state legislators used their committee leadership positions in the Assembly and Senate to move the project before their members. They also kept the core team advised about the likelihood of its passage, given their insider view of the political landscape in the capital. Even the BOR member who lived in Clearwater leaned on her friendship with the governor to keep the project front and center. While back on the campus in Clearwater, student leaders hammered home the message that the Arts Center was good for education.

The most powerful argument, however, was that two local referenda resoundingly approved the project. The reader may recall from earlier chapters, that some leaders thought referenda were just a way for politicians to dodge hard decisions, while others thought they were a true reflection of public sentiment. Regardless of their views before the referenda vote played

out, supporters used the big win to bring home the message of hometown support. Two observations arise from this backstage strategy. The first is that politics always operates within the reality of situational ethics – Flyvbjerg would call it phronetic leadership, or practical wisdom. Or, as Grint (2005) benignly put it, results based ethical leadership must be contextualized toward some good end. And not so benignly by Max Weber (1946/2013) who said political reality *is* the justification of ultimate ends.

We see here that even CM's who opposed the referenda did not hesitate to laud its outcome when their side prevailed. And not one of them, myself included, was heard to say, "we should be skeptical of the outcome since referenda are not a true reflection of public sentiment." A second observation must emphasize the necessity of paying attention when leading a complex system. A referendum you loath may turn out to be the best arrow in your quiver. Or, as Taleb (2007) put it, don't be a sucker to the unpredictable. Pay attention to change, adjust, try different moves, take risks, use what you have. In a local case in point, the Chamber director described the impact of the referendum on the state legislature.

> We knew we had to ask the state for money. Well, all of a sudden
> the ask became much more relevant when we had the referenda vote,
> the yes's and the no's, city and county… it was golden"
>
> (interview Clearwater Chamber director)

Act III, Scene V: The Last Best Stand

Nearing the conclusion of this long process, in May 2015, the state budget took its first formal step in the powerful Joint Finance Committee (JFC), which had the power to determine what was ultimately included in the budget voted on by the state legislature. "Joint Finance" meant that members of both parties in the Senate and Assembly served on the committee; the majority party held the chair position. The JFC was chaired by two fiscal conservatives and

dominated by a fiscally conservative point of view - small government, low taxes, economic growth, personal responsibility. The Arts Center project was asking them to stretch that fiscal conservatism to appropriate one of the largest "provisions for funding a local project" arguing that the project "was in the public interest due to the relationship between the [Clearwater] community and the [local campus]" (Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Budget Summary, 2015-17).

Early on the morning of May 7, 2015, the core team departed Clearwater for yet another three-hour drive to the state capital. This time to witness the FJC meeting that would decide the project's fate. We dressed in our best suits, arrived early, and took our place in the front row of a public viewing area along an outside wall in the committee room. Like most rooms in the Capital, its heavy paneling smelled faintly of old wood infused with the lingering odor of cigar smoke from a time few now thought possible. A fierce ray of dusty sunlight streamed into the room through two tall and dingy windows on an exterior wall. The room was obviously not well cared for. The sounds of clicking laptops and vibrating cell phones seemed incongruous to a room steeped in history.

Sitting across from us on a high, horseshoe shaped dais, sat the Joint Finance Committee. The chair and vice chair took the center seats. Members of the majority party flanked them on each side; and beside them, members of the minority party filled out the ends of the horseshoe. This seating arrangement denoted the power of the majority party. The partisan tension between JFC members was palpable but polite. Many legislative staffers scurried around behind them as they prepared to convene the meeting. Occasionally the Legislators would raise a finger to call their staffer over and hand them a note or dart a furrowed brow in their direction. It looked very much a Goffman-like dramaturgy showing off the importance of their position. Sometimes committee members leaned over to whisper to one another, but most of the time, exactly like the

City Council, they shuffled through papers and scribbled notes to themselves. We had traveled a long way to witness the meeting even though we knew we would not be allowed to speak, but we were certain our physical presence would not go un-noticed. We sat up tall and held our gaze in a delicate balance between intimidation and respect. We did not talk to each other for four hours.

> Reflexive Statement: As a leader in a local government lower in the hierarchy of the state political apparatus, I despised the strategies that were necessary to make the system work for us. Though I mentally refused to accept it, the symbolic power of the state legislature manifested itself in my responsive politeness. I acted better than I wanted to. But I found a little comfort in reminding myself that before state legislators and governors took office, they were teachers, lawyers, carpenters, and farmers, just like me. But now, the symbolic power of their office made them instantly into something else that I had to reckon with. It was exhausting. I often wondered if citizens in Clearwater felt this way at City Council meetings.

The Arts Center project was near the last item on the agenda under the Administration and Miscellaneous Appropriations heading. The committee worked its way through monumental discussions about funding a several million-dollar sports arena remodel on the east side of the state and capital requests for worthy projects on university campuses like education buildings, student commons, and science centers. We sat still through it all, our quiet confidence tucked deep inside. Surely our backstage work would pay off; they would agree that this project was a good thing. UL (university leader) who sat beside me that day, recalled one of the reasons for our confidence in her interview.

> … our local legislators really came into play because they were able to [lobby their colleagues]. Remember, there was the grant for the basketball arena in the same budget. Our legislators said, you're going to spend all that money in the east side of state; and you can't go $15 million in the Northwest?
>
> I would say that the best way [to describe it] was a lot of horse trading going on to get the budget votes we needed. Our legislators really came through and were able to persuade leadership in the legislature that this was a good thing; it was an economic development project.
>
> (interview with UL)

We were painfully aware that our backstage work contacting the governor, wearing matching scarves, writing letters to legislators, and spending all the political capital we owned rested on this one decision. But fate was not on our side, and it was not to be, for other black swans were upon us that day. Just the day before this meeting the state learned that its revenue projections were down precipitously. The budget office projected a $197 million shortfall in the coming biennium. The JFC was directed by legislative leadership to cut all non-essential projects, including Clearwater's Arts Center. In a vote along partisan lines, members voted to delete $15 million for the project and directed Clearwater to come back in 2017 with proof that the project remained a state interest. In other budget cutting action that day, the JFC reduced the Governor's Executive budget by $32.5 million, reduced spending by $29 million, and cut 33 full-time state positions (State Representative E-Newsletter Update, May 8, 2015). After the vote, we rose slowly from our seats and shuffled single file out of the room. We collapsed on a cold stone bench along a hollow corridor, where we sat a spell to lick our wounds. Slowly, it sunk in that the fight was not over - and we had a three-hour drive home.

That evening back in Clearwater a sad little band of 30 people or so gathered at the Arts Center site. We hung banners on the construction fence proclaiming we would never give up. We sang songs and made fiery speeches in an improvisational tour de force. But the reality was that even though our phronetic leadership wrote a perfect script, gathered a tight team, donned the right costumes, and mustered a referenda victory, it was not enough to get the votes we needed out of the state legislators. Other black swans were more powerful. One must consider therefore, that the feel for the game of politics is just that - a feel, never a guarantee. Equally important though, as Taleb (2007) advised, we should not be suckers to such black swans, and we were not.

Our Last Hope

Taking a cue from an earlier nod, the core team immediately started an application for the grant the Governor had hinted she could support. In the end, the Governor became our last hope. In the days before the application deadline, we took advantage of a chance encounter between a legislative staff person close to the project and the Governor's Chief of Staff, that secretly revealed the Governor was still on board and recommended a fast track to her Building Commission. The team used this insight to bend the application towards what we latter learned was a successful strategy.

Twenty days later the Joint Finance Committee restored funding for the Arts Center through the State Building Commission - a committee the Governor chaired. $15 million in a grant was coming to the Arts Center from the State. Finally, we met the condition that opened the gates for local funding. For reasons I have suggested earlier in this chapter, the Governor fulfilled a promise to Clearwater. Though I was not able to interview the Governor, I conjecture her reasons for doing so were a mix of preparing for a potential national campaign and a nod to loyal partisans in Clearwater. This is the way of politics.

When it was over The *Speaking for Growth* advocacy group in Clearwater posted a thank you message to the Governor on their social media page:

> We are grateful to the committee members and the Governor for funding the Arts Center. Their vote embraces the innovative and collaborative nature of the project and recognizes that by working together we can accomplish more than the old way of going it alone. We will pay you back.
>
> (Post from City Council President**)**

Several months later, in August 2015, the core team drove back across the state one last time to accept a big check from the Governor. We took pictures shaking the Governor's hand, not only because we appreciated her support, but because it was a practically wise habit to say thank you. This is another exemplar of the art of phronetic leadership.

Phronetic Leaders Do Not Need all the Power

Flyvbjerg's (1998, p. 225-236) grand theory about power is that it creates its own rationality; that it will rationalize anything to justify a desired good end. Power defines reality, he said. Surprisingly perhaps, Flyvbjerg's grand antidote to this power of power is not confrontation, but the boring stability of the practice of politics, administration, and planning, which he calls a subtle power. We learned here, however, that his antidote is not always so subtle – beware the wily and shy politician (or phronetic local politician) who is skilled at using the power relationships of a stable political system she knows well. No confrontation necessary; just the *longue duree'* of a practical and focused political life. Or, as my leadership muse whispered - stay calm and make decisions.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the final two Acts in a municipal drama that examined phronetic leadership throughout a long and complex redevelopment project. The analytic approach nudged Goffman's theory of social dramaturgy into a political dramaturgy framework that followed the exercise of power in frontstage political strategizing. Bourdieu's concepts of social and symbolic capital revealed the mediums of exchange used to finagle financial support on that stage, while Flyvbjerg's theory of power as the producer of reality showed how phronetic leadership, with its

intuitive sense of how things work, exercised its own power through the steady and calm application of local know-how.

Using a dramaturgical lens, the chapter also analyzed how leaders used backstage strategies, like horse trading votes, capitalizing on insider information, and sending political comrades to woo like-minded conservative skeptics. And other strategies, like hip young emissaries speaking the same language as campus students, or the persuasive speech of an offstage letter, or a social media script that hit the right emotional buttons. As a result of these actions, the Arts Center idea materialized into a vibrant center for the Arts in a city that desperately wanted that to happen.

This chapter ends the drama of Clearwater's Arts Center. From the perspective of its supporters, the story had a happy ending. Project leaders collected the funding they needed; they hammered out land-use and development agreements with the city, and overcame formidable local opposition. This happened in part by luck, but primarily because a core team of leaders worked together like tight knit "conspirators" (to use Bourdieu's language) to forge a strategy that kept their eyes on the prize and a boat load of local know-how that allowed them to change course mid-stream when they had to. The reader understands now that it was never a straight path, which is summed up nicely by a retired city manager I interviewed for this study.

> … I am a sailor, so I think about leadership like a sailor. Leadership is like sailing really, in the sense that everyone on the crew has the same goal - to arrive at your destination – the firm shore. But the strategy for getting there is not a straight line.
> Sailing, and leadership, are more like tacking against a head wind in a zig zag pattern, shifting the sail to catch a fickle wind. It is never a straight path but full of small and constant change, which is why sailors never leave their post …

My leadership experience in this project was exactly like this.

Epilogue

At the time of this writing the Arts Center had finished its first full season and was well into a second. The first season presented a mix of local arts, university performances, and internationally recognized talent. According to the Executive Director 80,000 – 100,000 people attended events in each of the first two years. Patrons enjoyed about 250 performances each of those years, which supported over a dozen full time staff, and many more part time, and spent about a quarter million dollars on concessions.

Project supporters were certain from the beginning that the Arts Center would have a positive economic impact on the city. Now, almost two years after its opening, there is measurable fiscal impact data. Equalized property value in the TIF District (Tax Incremental Financing District) that includes the Arts Center increased $25 million between 2015 and 2019 and property tax revenue almost doubled in the same period (TID tax report, December 2019). Public documents report that vacancy rates in downtown dropped by almost half a percent 2018-2019 (Clearwater, economic development department). And the university saw an increase from 22% to 27% of its graduates staying in the area. Student retention is a signal of a positive relationship between the city and the campus. That is a 25% increase in the percentage of students staying, said a university administrator I interviewed. The Arts Center story was also covered by the national press, including an article in Time Magazine … "the cultural chemistry that is happening here … will bring 100,000 visitors and a $40 million economic boost to the region" (June 30, 2016) and in *The Atlantic*, describing Clearwater as a "town discovering itself (August 15, 2013). Further, Clearwater was named one of the Top 10 college towns in the US by *College Gazette* (January 2, 2020). The city also continued to develop downtown property. In 2019 it converted an old industrial site into a redevelopment vision with river walks, housing,

and businesses in a mixed-use district near the Arts Center. As a result, a local business expanded its operation and multi-family affordable housing was constructed. The Arts Center's positive economic impact is hard to deny.

But a little more than halfway into the Center's second season a world pandemic called COVID 19 swept into the city, testing everything we thought we understood about collective social responsibility, as a virulent pandemic virus spread across the globe in a matter of months. It still rages as I write this dissertation, months after its first accounting. By March 2020 governments around the world issued "shelter at home" orders, social distancing, and face mask wearing to slow the spread and afford medical systems time to increase capacity for critical patients. In Clearwater, the Arts Center complied with health department orders and closed its doors in mid-March 2020. University students transitioned to virtual classrooms. The costume design and sound rooms went silent. All performances were cancelled, though some rescheduled to the next season. Tickets were refunded upon request. The Executive Director applied for small business relief from the Federal Government and was able to pay staff through August 2020. The Center was successful in winning a second State sponsored relief package in mid-summer to avoid downsizing its workforce, and in autumn 2020 an ambitious local philanthropic appeal coughed up another $500,000 to keep operations alive.

The doors may have locked, but the Arts Center was alive inside as it re-purposed its space to help fight the local economic fallout from the pandemic. For example, their 3-D printer cranked out face masks for area health care workers. The Center also joined with a statewide broad-band network to host free virtual concerts every week. And it developed virtual and in-person Learning Pods with a STEM focus for middle and high school students. It also created virtual classrooms for a Lego project for school age kids.

But there was more to come. In May 2020, a disgraceful incident gripped our country with the killing of a black man by a white veteran police officer. The killing, caught live on video, ignited a righteous outrage and weeks of protesting in cities across the world. Several citizen action groups in Clearwater held peaceful protest demonstrations too. Many were downtown across the river from the Arts Center, which provided the protesters with technical support in lighting and sound. As I write this epilogue the world is still holding its breath as mayors and city councils scrutinize policing policies and consider reallocating department funding in their city budgets. It is a time of great uncertainty whose full impact on the Arts Center is yet to be determined.

I ended this study's timeline prior to the time these black swan events enter the history of the Arts Center but they remain a significant factor in its future, nonetheless.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusions and Implications for Further Study

> … ruling a big country is like cooking a small fish.
> *The Lau Tzu*, in Chia and Holt, 2009

The driving force behind this dissertation was a dogged determination to understand leadership - more specifically, to understand what it is. I poured seven years of leadership studies and 25 years of leadership practice into a boots-on-the-ground examination of my municipal leadership experience in a redevelopment project, certain I would find answers for what leadership is in a retrospective examination of my own insights, despite being a novice researcher. But even after an exhaustive literature search and conducting a thorough research process, a concise definition of leadership remains a contested concept - an art of the imagination that defies definition.

While I was not able to unveil a concise definition, I may have devised an analytic package for examining what leadership does. As I see it, the key discovery in this study was not what leadership is, but a useful analytic approach for examining what it does. Or in Flyvbjerg's words, what leadership actually does, not what it should do. Defying more conventional leadership studies that combine an outsider analysis with surveys and observations, this dissertation answered the calls from Flyvbjerg and LaMagdeleine for a more phronetic approach in the form of an intense normative case study with an insider's perspective.

The normative insider case study may be often overlooked as an analytic tool in leadership studies, but I would argue it was a legitimate model for conducting this intense research into what it took to build an Arts Center in a mid-sized city. For example, I could not have discerned the significant import of Council meeting dramaturgy without presiding over 216

City Council meetings over a decade as Council President, or recognized the subtle dramaturgical instincts at work in writing the perfect referendum language or crafting short missives to powerful politicians. Nor could I have turned a researcher's razor-sharp gaze on the strategies of fellow leaders who burned tremendous social capital to lead the Arts Center project to completion. None of these insights would have been possible without an intense, insider perspective. This is not to say that leadership studies can only be conducted by experiential leaders, but when that perspective is available and employed, it lends a quality of credibility to the scholarship of an already contested concept.

This study used a broad analytic package that blended sociological, leadership and complexity theories. Goffman's dramaturgical theory provided the key to constructing a useful framework and creating a language for analyzing leadership as a drama-like practice. My approach advanced the idea that leaders perfect dramaturgical instincts over time that they use to craft intended outcomes. But I also argued that one should not see leadership only as drama. Instead, a full analysis of its artful practice must examine other strategies, like experiential and practical instinct and knowing how to pay attention. To that end, Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and earned social capital, coupled with leadership and complexity theorists' insights into strategizing chaotic social events, completed a useful analytic blend with which to conduct this phronetic examination of leadership practice as a practical art.

My analysis began with an examination of the dramaturgical instincts used as strategies on front and backstage performances. On the frontstage for example, in the first Act we saw evidence of how performance was used to signify the status and legitimacy of the City Council in the somber setting of its meeting Chambers and the tight control of accepted behavior. And how the Council President's instincts elevated the symbolic power of her position during those

meetings through a performance ritual that demanded civil behavior. We saw evidence of other frontstage dramaturgical instincts when leaders of the Arts Center project staged a perfectly choregraphed performance in front of the City Council. In it, two key leaders played off each other's talents to tell the story that had to be told to get the vote they needed. We saw more evidence later in the Council President's instincts for bringing along Arts Center skeptics by inviting them to participate in design, operating, and public space decisions. Even more dramaturgical instincts were put to use in the second Act when key leaders finagled money out of fiscally conservative state legislators by traveling great distances to fill the state capital building with 140 project supporters, wearing matching scarves and performing with respect in the presence of a power greater than theirs.

The analysis presented evidence of backstage performances as well. As when the Council President used her instincts again to write a "letter between equals" to the Governor, aimed at securing a positive nod from her budget. When a university leader used her instincts to host a tour of the project site for a pivotal decision maker, who became a staunch supporter. And when a Chamber leader used a team of conspirators who shared a political philosophy, to discharge these comrades to like-minded decision makers in the state capital. And when city staff used the backstage power of regulation and finance to insist on slow and steady planning against the instincts of a risk-taking private sector.

In all, we saw how these leaders used their dramaturgical instincts toward an intended outcome, which in this case was building a new Arts Center. Analyzing their actions as performance opened one's thinking to the art of leadership, where every movement mattered and success rested on holding a tight dramaturgical team in perfect pitch. This dramaturgical

approach provided a deeper understanding of what leadership actually does and offers evidence for the utility of a dramaturgical lens when leadership is studied as a practical art.

My phronetic approach did not stop with dramaturgy however, but intertwined other concepts as well. Bourdieu's habitus came into play as a key grounding for an analysis of how leaders used their intimate knowledge of the city's habits and values to create the perfect script for the Arts Center effort. For example, knowing citizens longed for a worthy downtown and valued the arts, they told a story about a magnificent Arts Center that would change the city center for good. And knowing citizens' habit of participating in governance, they met them face to face 65 times so they could speak of their concerns. And knowing that citizens preferred efficient government decision making, the President kept a lid on public meetings. And because the city clutched a frugal public purse, project leaders shook the philanthropy tree and plucked money from higher powers with golden tongued tales of a prosperous future state. In these examples we see how the leaders who wrote the Arts Center's script never strayed far from the city's habits and values.

Bourdieu's concept of circulating social capital added a third layer to my phronetic approach, particularly analyzing the flow of different forms of capital throughout the drama. Through it, we saw how the Council President spent her political capital on an appeal to the Governor's political ambition. We saw how the cultural capital of a local business owner put the instincts of other social capital holders to good use to launch a smooth and savvy pro-Arts Center campaign on social media. And how the cultural capital of a respected business leader, with a history of civic boosterism, spelled smooth sailing for this beloved project champion. In these leadership strategies, social capital was transformed into an art form flowing through the project like silver coins in a crowded fish market.

So far, we have reviewed how leaders' dramaturgical instincts where enhanced by their knowledge of habitus and the circulation of their accumulated social capital. The last piece of my phronetic approach added another analytic layer in the emerging leadership studies of social complexity and how leaders lead in constantly changing and unpredictable social systems. We saw evidence of two responses in this case. First, how anchoring principles guided, but did not tether, leaders' reactions to changing circumstances. For example, when a business owner expertly clung to her arts-based business principles while allowing her business to enter the local political fray surrounding the project. And when the City Council held tight to the principle of calm decision making in the face of citizen opposition and multiple lawsuits. A second response to complexity occurred in the strategic emergence of tactics that avoided the fate of Taleb's "suckers" by keeping eyes on the prize despite a zigzagging course. For example, when the state legislature cut off the project's lifeline, leaders reconnoitered a strategy through the Governor. And when a citizen referendum arrived like a black swan, a tech savvy team countered with killer messaging targeted to multiple audiences. Here, the art of nimble but grounded leadership presented another analytic view of what phronetic leaders actually do.

The analytic concepts intertwined in this study produced a deep and rare look at a phronetic leadership steeped in a place. Evidence showed that when the show must go on, leaders' dramaturgical instincts ad-libbed performances suited to a constantly changing scene. When taken together, as my study strongly suggests, this intertwined analytic approach revealed one likely answer to the question "what does phronetic leadership actually do?" It not only pays attention, but pays attention to the right things - rather like frying a small fish.

A caveat remains however, one should not conclude that leadership performance is just for entertainment because we use the language of theatre to understand it. Instead, leadership

always has an intended outcome, a goal, a justified purpose; and beware the researcher who doesn't peek behind the Oz curtain. For dramaturgical instincts can be used for good, or for ill, as history is rife with examples. A dark side of leadership art must be contemplated - when it connects to habits and is intimately aware of values, it can do almost anything it wants. This is disturbing, of course. But one cannot deny the presence in this case of Flyvbjerg's power rationality, Bourdieu's symbolic violence, and Goffman's team of co-conspirators in flawless performances mastering their intended outcome. We must admit that a dark side of leadership's practical art will use power to make its own good end, and just because leadership is an art does not mean it is beautiful. But it can be.

While the point of leadership is most honestly a means to an end, the "end" matters, and people can disagree about what a good end should be. But the ethical leader cannot decide that alone. Instead, it is her ethical responsibility to bring followers along in the decision making that affects their lives. Fortunately, ethical salvation arrives in the simple and powerful logic of Democracy in its sacred demand that leaders walk closely beside their decisions. This is what makes Democracy worth saving.

Implications for Further Study

The conclusion of this study suggests the need for further leadership scholarship, especially in broad thinking programs like the one I just completed.

More specifically, future leadership studies could further test the merits of a dramaturgical analysis in leadership study. To my knowledge again, this study was a rare example of grounding an analysis on dramaturgical instincts intertwined with other relevant concepts. I think it proved to be an effective approach to the study of phronetic leadership that

could be repeated in other settings, like corporate business, education, and national governance. But more research is also needed on local political leadership, an area of leadership studies that still lacks theoretical attention (Kjaer, 2013, p.269). Especially if it would evoke more positive sentiments toward political leadership, which is suffering in the wake of this country's recent national political leadership spectacle.

Future leadership research could add to its social relevance by conducting more normative case studies like this one. This study challenged the prominence of the "view from nowhere" research approach. Replacing it with a reflexive insider case study that paid serious attention to the lived experience of the researcher. This inside approach is perhaps itself an art form and could be perfected by more experienced researchers than I using their well-earned leadership insights. We might recall that Jane Jacobs began her research on municipal planning by wandering the sidewalks of her beloved New York City. Her boots-on-the-ground model guided me throughout my study.

Lastly, this was not a comparable study with a "compare and contrast" examination of arts projects across municipalities, and generalizability was not my goal. But it is natural for thinkers and teachers to wonder if this leadership model could be instructive. Such an investigation must first prove this was not a black swan event – so unique and profound it could never happen again. Even if one could prove it was not a black swan, assembling the elements of a comparative study would be difficult because of the large number of inputs, which could preclude a data set of comparable characteristics. For example, would one only study cities of comparable populations, or only in the Midwest, or only redevelopment projects that focused on arts centers, or only cities with a Council/Manager form of government, or maybe only cities with female Council Presidents. (That would surely be a small data set.) But perhaps it doesn't

matter, and the one lesson about leadership that's worth remembering is that leaders should get out a small frying pan.

REFERENCES

Akimoto, F. (2009). The birth of land use planning in American urban planning. *Planning Perspectives*, 24(4), 457-483.

Anheier, H., Gerhards, J.& Romo, F. (1995). Forms of capital and social structure in cultural fields: Examining Bourdieu's social topography. *The American Journal of Sociology*, (100)4, 859. ABI/INFORM Global.

Appelrouth, S. (2013). Cultural sociology and the meaning of music. In P. Kivisto (Ed.), *Illuminating social life: Classical and contemporary theory revisited,* Sage Publications, (pp. 133-152).

Attoh, K. (2011). What kind of right is the right to the city? *Progress in human geography*, 35(5). 669-685.

Bailey, F. G., (2001). *Treasons, stratagems, and spoils: How leaders make practical use of values and beliefs*. Westview Press.

Barland, L. (1960). *Sawdust City: A history of [Clearwater] from earliest times to 1910*. Worzalla Publishing Co.

Becker, H. (1998). *Tricks of the trade: How to think about your research while you're doing it*. University of Chicago Press.

Bertinelli, L. & Black, D. (2002). Urbanization and growth. *CORE Discussion Papers* 2002/44. http://hdl.handle.net/2078.1/4288.

Blakeley, B. (2017). *A History of [Clearwater] Volume 1: The lumbering era*. Clear Valley Museum Press (a pseudonym).

_____, (2019). *A History of [Clearwater] Volume II: The manufacturing age*, 1906-1951. Clear Valley Museum Press (a pseudonym).

Bogden, R. & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods*. (5th Ed.) Pearson Education.

Borreca, A. (1993). Political Dramaturgy: A Dramaturg's review. *The Drama Review,* 37(2), 56-79.

Bourdieu, P. (1985). The social space and the genesis of groups. *Theory and Society,*14, 723-744

_____ (1989). Social space and symbolic power. *Sociological Theory,* 7(1), 14-25.

Bouty, I., Gomez, M.L. & Chia, R. (2019). Strategy emergence as wayfinding. *Management,* 22(3), 438-465.

Bretagnolle, A., Delisle F., Mathian, H., & Vatin, G. (2015). Urbanization of the United States over two centuries: An approach based on a long-term database (1790-2010). *International Journal of Geographical Information Science,* 29(5), 850-867.

Burbules, N. (2019). Thoughts on phronesis. *Ethics and Education,* 14(2). 126-137. DOI: 10,1080/17449642.2019,1587689.

Cairney, P. (2012). Complexity theory in political science and public policy. *Political Studies Review,* 10. 346-358. Doi: 10.1111/j.1478-9301.2012.00270x.

Chapman, R. (2015). It's the economy stupid! and the environment: An urgent reminder. *Environmental Ethics,* 37(4), 465-484.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory*. (2nd Ed.) Sage Publishing.

Chia, Robert C.H. & Holt, R. (2009). *Strategy without Design: The silent efficacy of indirect a*c*tion.* Cambridge University Press.

Clegg, S. & Pitsis, T. (2012). Phronesis, projects and power research. (pp. 66-94). In B. Flyvbjerg, T. Landman & S. Schram.(Eds.), *Real social science: Applied phronesis*. Cambridge University Press.

Collins, R. & Ditton J., (Eds.). (1980). Erving Goffman and the development of modern social theory. *The view from Goffman*. Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 170-207.

Connolly, P. & Healy, J. (2004). Symbolic violence, locality, and social class: The educational and career aspirations of 10-11-year-old boys in Belfast. *Pedagogy, Culture, and Society*, 12(1), 15-33.

Crocker-Buque, T., Mindra, G., Duncan, R., & Mounier-Jack, S. (2017). Immunization urbanization and slums – a systematic review of factors and interventions. *BMC Public Health*. 17:556, 1-17. doi 10.1186/s12889-017-4473-7.

de Roo, G. (2018). Ordering Principles in a Dynamic World of Changes – On social complexity, transformation, and the conditions for balancing purposeful interventions and spontaneous change. *Progress in Planning*, 125, 1-32.

Eisenberg, A. (2013). Negotiating the social landscape to create social change. In P. Kivisto (Ed.). *Illuminating Social Life: Classical and contemporary theory revisited.* Sage Publishing. (pp. 345-368).

Feiock, R. (2004). Politics, institutions, and local land-use regulation. *Urban Studies*, 41(2), 363-375.

Flyvbjerg, B. (1998*). Power and rationality: Democracy in practice*. University of Chicago Press.

_____. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can* su*cceed again*. Cambridge University Press.

Flyvbjerg, B., Bruselius, N. & Rothengatter, W. (2003). *Megaprojects and risk: An anatomy of ambition.* Cambridge University Press.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2012). Introduction: New directions in social science. In B. Flyvbjerg, ., T. Landman & S. Schramm (Eds.). *Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis*. Cambridge University Press. (pp. 15-27).

Florida, R. (2017). Winner-take-all urbanism: Geographic divisions in the modern era. *Brown Journal of World Affairs*. V- XXIII(II), 1-17.

Frank, A. (2012). The feel for power games: Everyday phronesis and social theory. In B. Flyvbjerg, T. Landman & S. Schram (Eds.). *Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis*. Cambridge University Press.(pp. 48-65).

Freeman, R. (2019). Meeting talk and text: policy and politics in practice. *Policy & Politics*. 47(2). 371-387.

Gendron, R. (2006). Forging collective capacity for urban redevelopment: “Power To” “Power Over” or Both? *City and Community* 5(1), 5-22.

Goffman, E. (1959). The moral career of the Mental Patient. *Psychiatry*, 22(2). 123-142. DOI: 10.1080/00332747.1959.11023166.

_____. (1963). *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the social organization of gatherings.* The Free Press.

_____. (1973). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. The Overlook Press.

_____. (1997). *The Goffman reader*. C. Lemert & A. Branaman (Eds). Blackwell Publishers Ltd., pp. ix-lxxxii, 35-41,109-127.

Graham, W. (2016). *Dream Cities: Seven urban ideas that shape the world*. Harper Collins. pp. 1-189.

Grint, K. (2005). *Leadership: Limits and possibilities*. Palgrave McMillon.

_____. (2010, a.). *The Cuckoo Clock syndrome: Addicted to command, allergic to Leadership.* http://dx.doi.org/10.1016.j.emj.2010.05.002.

_____. (2010, b.). *Leadership: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.

_____. (2014, January 31). How to Work with Wicked Problems. In *Leadership Perspectives: The International Leadership Association*. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrWbicvDlPw.

Harding, S. (Ed.). (2004). *The Feminist Standpoint theory reader: Intellectual and political controversies.* Routledge. 1-17, 309-316.

Harvey, D. (1989). From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. G*eografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography,* 71(1), 3-17. DOI: 10.1080/04353684.1989.11879583

Hieb, J. (1988). *An Illustrated History of [Clearwater]: Heartland of the Valley*. Windsor Publications, Inc.

Holt, M. (1994). Dewey and the "cult of efficiency": Competing ideologies in collaborative pedagogies of the 1920's. *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 14(1). Special issue: Collaboration and Change in the Academy. www. jaconlinejournal.com. 77-92.

Jacobs, J. (2011). The d*eath and life of great American cities*. (50th Anniversary Ed.) Modern Library.

Johansson, C. (2007). Goffman's sociology: An inspiring resource for developing public relations theory. *Public Relations Review*, 33, 275-280.

Kageyama, P. (2011). *For the love of cities: The love affair between people and their places*. Creative Cities Productions.

Kjaer, U. (2013). Local political leadership: The art of circulating political capital. *Local Government Studies*, 39(2). 253-272.

Kraut, R. (2017). *Plato.* E.N. Zalta (Ed.). The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy. Retrieved from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato/.

LaMagdeleine, D. (2016). *The leadership imagination: An introduction to taxonomic leadership analysis.* Edward Elgar Publishing.

Little, A. (2015). Complexity and real politics. R. Geyer & P. Cairney, (Eds.). *Handbook on complexity and public policy.* Edward Elgar Publishing. (pp. 34-48).

Lizardo, O. (2009, December). The cognitive origins of Bourdieu's habitus. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*. www.onlinelibrary.wile.com/doi/abs/10.111/j.1468-5914.2004.00255.x.

Lofland, L. (1989). On Fieldwork. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 18(2), 123-132.

Logan, J. & Molotch, H. (1987). *Urban Fortunes: The political economy of place*. University of California Press, 50-98.

Logan, J., Bridges, R., Whaley, C. & Crowder, K. (1997). The character and consequences of growth regimes: an assessment of 20 years of research". *Urban Affairs Review*, 32(5), 603-630.

Lovering, J. (2007). The relationship between urban regeneration and neoliberalism: Two presumptuous theories and a research agenda. *International Planning Studies*, 12(4), 343-366. DOI: 10.1080/13563470701745504

Loyal, S. & Quilley, S. (2017). The particularity of the universal: critical reflections on Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power and the state. *Theory and Society,* 46, 429-462. DOI 10.1007/s11186-017-9298-y.

MacLeod, G. (2011). Urban politics reconsidered: Growth machine to post-democratic city. *Urban Studies* 48(12), 2629-2660.

Maxwell, J. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach.* Sage Publishing.

Merelman, R. (1969). The Dramaturgy of politics. *Sociological Quarterly,* 10(2), pp. 216-241.

Murray, P. (1989). Complexity theory and the fifth discipline. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, (11)3. pp. 275-293.

Nicholls, W. & Beaumont, J. (2004). The urbanization of justice movements: Possibilities and constraints for the city as a space of contentious struggle. *Space and Polity*, 8(2), 119-135.

O'Brian, T., Payne, S., Nolan, M., Ingleton, C. (2010). Unpacking the politics of evaluation: A dramaturgical analysis. *Evaluation,* 16(4), 431-444.

Ortman, S., Cabaniss, A., Sturm, J. & Bettencourt, L. (2014). The pre-history of urban scaling, *PLoS ONE* 9(2): e87902. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0087902.

Park, R. (1915). The City: Suggestions for the investigation of human behavior in the city environment. *The American Journal of Sociology*. XX (5). pp. 577-612.

Park, R., Burgess, E. & McKenzie, R. (1925). *The City*. The University of Chicago Press.

Peiser, R. (1990, Autumn). Who Plans America? Planners or Developers? *APA Journal*, 56(4), 496-502.

Pettit, M. (2011). The con man as model organism: The methodological roots of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical self. *History of the Human Sciences*. pp. 1-17. DOI:10.1177/0952695111398828.

Plato. (1968). *The republic of PLATO*. Bloom, A. (Trans). Basic Books Inc., pp. 35-61.

Reps, J. W. (1965). *The Making of urban America: A history of city planning in the United States*. Princeton University Press. 204-240, 349-382.

Rigoni, D. (2002). *Teaching what can't be taught: The shaman's strategy*. The Scarecrow Press.

Schram, S. & Caterino,B. (2006). Introduction: Framing the debate. In S. Schram & B. Caterino (Eds.) *Making political science matter: Debating knowledge, research, and method.* New York University Press. (pp. 1-16).

Scott, J. (2020). *Seeing Like a State: How certain schemes to improve the human condition* h*ave failed, Part 4: The missing link*. Retrieved from http://books.google.com/books (Original work published 1998). 309-358.

Shattuck, I.S. (1953, April). *A Master Plan [Clearwater]: Report to the Common Council in the City of [Clearwater]*. I.S. Shattuck, Planning Consultant.

Simmons, W. (2012). Making the teaching of social justice matter. In B. Flyvbjerg, T. Landman & S. Schram (Eds.). *Real Social Science: Applied phronesis.* Cambridge University Press. (pp. 246-263).

Spivak, G., (2010). R. C. Morris, (Ed.). *Can the Subaltern Speak: Reflections on the history of an idea*. Columbia University Press. 21-78.

Swartz, D. (2003). From critical sociology to public intellectual: Pierre Bourdieu and politics. *Theory and Society,* 32, 791-823.

Taleb, N. (2007). *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable.* Random House.

Thacher, D. (2006 May). The normative case study. *American Journal of Sociology*, 111(6), 631-1676.

_____. (2009). The cognitive foundations of humanistic governance. *International Public Management Journal.* 12(2), 1-26.

Thacher, D. & Rein, M. (2004). Managing value conflict in public policy. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, 17(4). 457- 486.

Van Praet, E. (2009, January). Staging a Team Performance: A linguistic ethnographic analysis of weekly meetings at a British Embassy. *Journal of Business Communication*, 46(1). 80-99.

Vitiello, D. (2013). Monopolizing the metropolis: Gilded age growth machines and power in American urbanization. *Planning Perspectives* 28(1), 71-90.

Wacquant, L. (2004). Pointers on Pierre Bourdieu and democratic politics. *Constellations*. 11(1). 3-15.

_____. (2013). Symbolic power and group-making: On Pierre Bourdieu's reframing of class. *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 13(2), 174-191.

Wacquant, L. & Akcaoglu, A. (2017). Practice and symbolic power in Bourdieu: A view from Berkeley. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 17(1). DOI: 10.1177/1468795X16682145.

Warfield Rawls, A. (1987). The interaction order sui generis: Goffman's contribution to social theory. *Sociological Theory*, 5(2), 136-149.

Weber, M. (2013). *Politics as Vocation*. Isha Books (Reprinted from *Politics as Vocation*, by Max Weber, 1946).

Weininger, E. (2002). Pierre Bourdieu on social class and symbolic violence, Chapter 4. (pp. 116-166). Erik Olin Wright, (Ed.). *Alternative Foundations of Class Analysis*. www.ssc.wisc.edu.

Wheatley, M. (1992). *Leadership and the new science: Learning about organization from an orderly universe*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Wilson, N. (2013). Interaction without walls: Analyzing leadership discourse through dramaturgy and participation. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 17(2). 180-199.